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neighbors paying friendly visits and of playing children gradually become stilled. It is the time for the evening meal. By nine o'clock at the latest all is quiet and Mirebalais, man and beast, is asleep.

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The *vodun* drums are heard only on Saturday nights, and then the dance must be sufficiently close to the town, and the wind in the right direction, for the sound to be audible.

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Permits for these dances must be obtained, and are regularly given by the police officials — or were in 1934 — and word is passed on that on a given Saturday certain households will give *vodun* dances. If the dances are held in the foothills to the west, the Tombe River must be forded, and the existence of such a barrier between the village and the site of the dance makes this a favorite region in which to hold them, even though they may have official sanction. During the rainy season

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attendance at dances on the opposite bank of the Artibonite River depends on the height of the stream, for when it is in flood not even the dugout canoes of the Haitians can cross it, while the ferry which Moreau de St. Mery speaks of as having been established in 1749 does not even exist in local tradition.¹⁴ Yet no dance lacks participants or spectators, for these occasions furnish the principal opportunity for recreation

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even as they fill their proper religious function. Early in the week discussions can be heard of the dances to be held, and though the official frown of the Catholic priest is always to be reckoned with, the importance of these dances, and the numbers who attend them, do not seem markedly lessened by this fact.

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Those whose social position in the community makes them more sensitive to such criticism merely take the precaution to slip quietly out of town after dark.

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When occasions of local or national significance and church holidays are celebrated, the town is full of country folk and visitors from the cities. Christmas and New Year's, Mardi Gras and Easter are all periods for such celebrations, while the first Sunday of every month witnesses a religious procession

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about the square that precedes the principal mass of the day. These processions, however, are as a mere rehearsal for the great procession held during the festival of St. Louis, the patron saint of the town. At that time the statue of the saint, carried by the faithful — among whom can be seen more than one perspiring *vodun* priest and *bocor* — is taken triumphantly through the streets to insure a good year. The nearness of the valley to the village of Ville Bonheur makes the great religious festival of Saut d'Eau, where the "miracle of the Virgin" is believed to have occurred, almost a local matter. And though Saut d'Eau lies well over the mountains, July 15 finds most of the population of Mirebalais away from home celebrating the miraculous revelation with folk from other parts of Haiti. May Day is celebrated as the "Fête de l'Agriculture," and two years ago a new day of rejoicing was added to the calendar of festivals. This is known as the "Festival of the Second Independence," the anniversary of the departure of the American Marines from Haiti, and is marked by the "illumination" of all houses the night before and a solemn discourse from the mayor after a *Te Deum* has been sung in the church.

Thus life in the valley of Mirebalais continues the course it has followed for the past two hundred years. Though its history, as we can reconstruct it, has been marked by turbulent periods, these have been far from the rule. It is true that because of its position it has always been a point to be defended, and often, both before and after the time of Haitian independence, it has been a region where decisive encounters with those who controlled the Spanish portion of the island have taken place. Not for many years, however, until the Caco uprising against the American Marines, did Mirebalais experience military activities on any considerable scale. After the death of Charlemagne Perrault, when his successor selected the valley as a strategic point to be defended, a large force of Marines was encamped near the confluence of the

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a mat or a cloth, supported in a reclining position with pillows and cloths, or on a covered box standing about a foot from the ground, with her legs drawn up. No fire is built in the house, all doors and windows are tightly shut, and covers are provided against a chill. A candle stands lighted at the threshold, and holy water is poured beside it; a candle is also often lighted in the church before the statue of the saint who corresponds to the vodun deity under whose protection the woman in labor is thought to be. In the room with her is the midwife and as many as six, seven, eight, or nine older women belonging to the families of the woman and her husband. The hands of the woman are made to rest on her knees, but where labor is prolonged, her arms are supported above her head to afford relief. She is three times given very hot tea or a drink made of the stewed leaves of the mango tree and of the bois lait. The midwife, with palm oil on her hands, watches the rhythm of labor and presses on the abdomen to facilitate delivery. 844 [768] [782]

If it becomes evident that this will be difficult, a vodun priest is at once called to determine by divination whether or not the deities who have been propitiated are satisfied. If the answer is a negative one, he promises future sacrifices or gives minor offerings immediately. Care is also taken to ascertain whether the trouble is due to the discontent of the family dead who may have been angered by neglect to wear mourning for them, or because sacrifices or a service due them have been delayed too long. Inquiries are similarly made to determine whether the spirits of twins might not be displeased, while the possibility that evil magic may have been invoked is not overlooked, especially if the husband has several wives. If the inquiry shows that the magic of a co-wife was responsible, a strong counter-charm is made at once. Should the woman in labor eventually die, however, her death is not considered to be the result of any act of infidelity on her part, and does not, as in other Negro cultures, prevent the usual burial and mourning customs being carried out. 845 [773] [787] [782] [775] [754] 845 [762]

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for the victims of smallpox. If family traditions also tell of those shot, not in war, but as prisoners, perhaps, a candle is lighted for them outside the cemetery wall. Though the couple may perform this ceremony together, each makes the request of the dead of his or her own family as the candles are lighted. This call on the dead is repeated several days after the marriage or later, when candles are again lighted.

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The sole exception to the performance of these rites before the new household is begun occurs in those cases of *placage* where a girl continues to live at her own home. This is rare, however, for the house of a man is usually built near that of his father, and he takes his wife there. But if special circumstances dictate otherwise, the ceremony of notifying and pacifying the family deities may be deferred, though a man must eventually present every woman with whom he lives to his family gods and in turn must be presented to the gods of the woman's family. In similar fashion the dead of both families must be adequately notified.

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Marriages rarely take place in the months of November and December, the former being disliked because it is "the month of the dead," during which All Saints' Day occurs, and the latter because it ends the year. Except for the Church wedding and less elaborate festivities to celebrate the event, the rites which mark a *placage* mating do not greatly differ from those which mark a legal marriage, which may be described in outline. The favorite day for Church marriages is Saturday, "the day of the Virgin," and the time for the ceremony is always early morning, before the heat of the day has set in. If the home of the girl is some distance from Mirelalaia, the party come to town the preceding day, the girl spending the night with some friend. Otherwise the bridegroom, accompanied by his relatives and friends, goes to the house of the girl early Saturday morning. Before the couple leave the home of her parents, water must be thrown on the ground in front of them, and also sprinkled by them before the en-

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entrance of the house — three times if there is one door (for the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost), three times before each door if there are two entrances, and once before each door if there are three. The wedding procession goes to church on foot. The men, if they are from the countryside, are stiff, uncomfortable, and hot in their unaccustomed "best" clothing and their often painful shoes, while the women are also self-conscious in their new dresses. The elaborateness of the ceremony varies with the fee paid the priest, but at all events the clanging church bell is heard notifying the town and its environs that a marriage is being consecrated.

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If the family of the bride or groom are well known in Mischala, a wedding reception may be given at their house for friends of the couple and of their parents, but the real festivities are held after the return to the new family home. As the procession approaches it, the "bush-priest," a functionary who, because of his knowledge of French, can read the papers of the Church, waits at the gate with two aides, small boys or girls, each with a flag, one red and one white. He has sacred water in one hand and a lighted candle in the other, and as he pours this water on the ground three times he intones the Pater Noster, the Ave Maria, the Credo, and other prayers. These concluded, hymns are sung by all the participants, and singing, a procession is formed with the "bush-priest" in the lead, followed by the flag-bearers, the couple who have just been married, arm in arm, the "godfather" and "godmother" of the marriage, as the witnesses are called, the parents of the bride and groom, and other close relatives. As the procession reaches the door of the house, it pauses and water is thrown on the ground three times; the circuit of the house is made twice again, and each time, as the door is reached, the participants solemnly enter.

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There coffee, liqueurs, wine, kola, and cakes are served to the principals and the more important members of the com-

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the phrase: "This is natural." Children are not spaced, for normally a man resumes intercourse with his wife the second or third month after childbirth. Except for the drinking of coconut milk and salt, which is believed to be effective in preventing conception if taken before intercourse, contraceptives are not known to women, which means that pregnancies follow in rapid succession. Families are not too large, however, despite this, those numbering seven or eight children being rare, even in the hills. The reason for this is a high incidence of infant mortality, which is obvious despite the absence of vital statistics. Abortions are usually resorted to by young women, who sustain the operation done by the uncertain skill of an old woman, in the fear that bearing a child will later stand in the way of a desirable legal marriage. Some men, however, take the precaution of placing a grain of native salt on the tongue while having intercourse during an illicit affair, believing that this will be effective in preventing conception.

A childless woman first goes to a vodun priest, to have him determine by divination if a co-wife has not invoked magic against her. If her question receives an affirmative answer, she acquires a "counter-charm" to offset the effect of the other woman's magic. Should such a charm be ineffective, she would offer her prayers before the shrines of the saints and make pilgrimages to such sacred places as Saut d'Eau, there phrasing her petition to the Virgin in some manner such as the prayer overheard as a woman lighted a candle and held it in her hand before placing it on a sacred rock:

"Vierge Miracles, Manman, voilà, depuis six ans depuis qui moins marié; moin apé vivre seul avec pauvre malheureux moin-a. Ça fait trois fois moin vini nan pié ou. Pas 'blé mandé moin fait ou, pour charité, moin ou petit pitite. Moin va minnin li ba ou. Moin apé parti, Manman, s' ou' pli, songé ça pitite m' mandé ou.—

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employed — do not remain with the drummers. These instruments are ordinarily in the hands of *hunsu*, who join the massed ring of dancers that constantly circles about the center pole. These dancers are not under possession, but are merely enjoying the evening or participating in the social aspect of the dance preparatory to becoming possessed. The rattle is held high above the heads of the dancers, and its sharp, steady notes are produced by quick, short, measured movements of the wrist. The end of a song, which sometimes does not come until fifteen or twenty minutes after its initial statement, is usually marked by a continuous shaking of a rattle, a process which effectually breaks the rhythm and makes it possible to begin a new song. The player of the rattle is an outstanding singer, who usually initiates the fresh refrain and continues to sing its repetitions as soloist in the alternation of solo and chorus which marks Haitian *vodun* singing as it marks most West African and New World Negro religious music.

When a possession occurs, the songs for the deity who has "arrived" are taken up as the drums play the rhythm of the god. As his possession comes on, the devotee falls to the ground, rolling before the drums, or staggers blindly about the dancing-space, or otherwise follows the characteristic behavior attributed to his god. After a time he begins to dance, whereupon a *hunsu* or the *hungan*, taking a calabash of water in one hand and a lighted candle in the other, dances opposite him, saluting the god as he performs his every movement in reverse; if he turns clockwise, the one dancing with him turns counter-clockwise; if he moves to the right, the other moves to the left. Except when executing these turns, the functionary of the cult never takes his eyes from the eyes of the possessed person, almost, as it were, hypnotizing him to help him come to himself. Eventually the possessed one recovers sufficiently to take the candle and the calabash of water in his own hands. Often spilling water as he moves, he makes his way to the central pole, pouring an offering and making the sign of the cross with the candle before it.

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ever, the man was not yet able to hold. Moving backwards toward the *maison de servitude*, all the spectators continued to sing the song of Damballa, while the man to whom the god had come half-danced and was half-carried up the path to the *tonnelle* and taken into the family house of worship.

• [788] When he had sufficiently recovered to be able to hold the candle and the water, he poured the water and unsteadily bowed three times in the accepted manner before the *couvert* set to the Rada gods. He now was enough in control of himself to emerge, and, with the *adjanikon* dancing before him with water and a candle, he once again came into the *tonnelle*, before the drums. As he appeared, the drummers stopped the Ogun rhythm they had been sounding, and in an intense silence all waited for the god to announce himself. Half on his knees before the drums, the one possessed began to sing in a cracked voice:

Damballa Wedo,
Papa m' c'est coulev'-o,
Na poi' bois
Moin pa' li monté.

Damballa Wedo,
Papa, I am a serpent-o,
There is no tree
I cannot climb.

With this initial statement, the Damballa rhythm rolled from the drums, as all echoed the song in chorused response, while the possessed figure, in strict conformity to the pattern, first poured water at the central post and then consecutively before the iron and each of the drums. Returning to the central post, he whirled about it, almost but never quite falling, until he could dance before the drums, awkwardly but acceptably, before he disappointed to rest in a near-by house.

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The explanation offered by this man of the manner in which he became possessed, and his varying attitudes toward his possession, are revealing. On several previous occasions the *hungan* who officiated at the dance had noticed that he was attending vodun rites and had joked with him about his interest in them. Once at an earlier dance this *hungan* had

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and, wearying of the singing, join the group outside the house, where those playing games and the story-tellers are gathered. One popular game is "forfeit," and a forfeit, if reclaimed by a girl, requires the singing of a *chanson de romance*, or if by a man, calls for the recitation of a poem or a humorous folk-tale. Before a forfeit is returned, all sing to a hand-clapping accompaniment:

C'est bien bon,
C'est bien bon,
Aha!

It is very good.
It is very good,
Aha!

Card-games, such as *mariai* (marriage), *trois-sept*, and *be-zique*, are also played. All these games are entered into with zest, for an important purpose in holding the wake is to amuse the dead, whose body lies near by, and thus send him away in good humor. When drinks are passed, the recipients must make three libations before drinking, one explanation holding that this is in accordance with the formula Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, another that the offering is for the *loa*, the dead, and the *marusa*. At about five o'clock in the morning the angelus closes the wake, after which most of those present leave, and only close friends and relatives remain to help with preparations for the funeral. This must take place the day following death, not only because of a legal requirement, but because of the fact that were a body to remain unburied for two nights, the expense of two wakes would have to be met. Before the ceremony of burial takes place, small children are often passed over the coffin three times, in leave-taking, that the spirit of the dead may not return for them.

The funeral itself is held in accordance with the rites of the Church, the difference between funerals consisting principally in the elaborateness of the ritual and the length of time the church bells are tolled, which in turn is determined by the ability of the family of the dead to meet the varying fees. Thus at the funeral of the mother of the *député* from Mire-

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*Toussaint, voici un couvert moi porté ba ou. Ou gardé
vo' enfant, comme vo' père et vo' mère dans la maison.*

—In the name of the Master of the Crossroads; in the
name of the Master of the Great Forest; in the name of
Baron Cemetery! Today, the first of All Saints' Day, here
are offerings I bring you. Guard your child as your father
and your mother in the house."

- [788] *Clairin* is thrown three times at each fork of the crossroads,
and some is also sprinkled in the center and at each corner of
the container of food. Three bits of earth are finally lifted
from the corners of the crossroads and taken to the home of
the worshipper. Here they are put in a plate with *clairin*,
which is first lighted and then extinguished, so that the mem-
bers of the family can anoint themselves with it and receive
strength with which to face the new year.

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Good magic has many expressions. Thus there is said to be
secret knowledge, transmitted in certain families from genera-
tion to generation, of how to control the rains. Those who
have control of magic of this sort are to be recognized when
they are seen to be completely dry while walking in a down-
pour. Generally such powers are used to insure a rainless day
for a *combite* or service, or to cause rain to fall the day after
a *combite* has made the field ready for hoeing, or when the
proper time for planting is at hand. Eventually, it is said, in
response to a temptation too great to be resisted, the possessor
of such magic will put it to other, evil ends. Then sooner or
later the punishment for this abuse of his knowledge is visited
upon him, so that in the end he meets his death by being
struck by the avenging lightning.

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The most powerful type of protective magic is known as a
drogue. One of the most potent of these — of the type referred
to by Léger in commenting on the ox-tail carried by Hyacinthe, or such a one as tradition holds Christophe possessed,
which gave him immunity from all but silver bullets — makes

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the crossroads, where he alone would have to conduct the brief rite that was necessary to complete the making of this garde. As he arrived at his destination — this portion of the description is his — the plate was put down with the kola beside it, and clairin was poured on the ground. The lighted candles were placed near by, and with arms outstretched, he spoke the following formula: [539] 789

<i>Au nom de Malt' Carrefour,</i>	In the name of the Master of the Crossroads.
<i>Voici un couvert sec de-pose jodi-a, Lundi.</i>	Here is an offering placed today, Monday.
<i>Au nom de Malt' Gran' Bra,</i>	In the name of the Master of the Great Forest,
<i>Ce couvert est pou' vous.</i>	This offering is for you.
<i>Malt' Carrefour', pour garde moin, sorti pou' ou.</i>	Master of the Crossroads, for [the sake of] my charm, which comes from you.
<i>Moin mande pou' garde</i>	I ask that you protect me
<i>Nan tout ces moin capab' trouwe moin</i>	In all I may encounter
<i>Pou' bien, nan pou' mal.</i>	Of good, and of evil.

Before leaving the crossroads, the maker of the garde touched the plate and bottles three times to earth, calling the names of Master of the Crossroads, Master of the Great Forest, and Master of the Cemetery. [188]

While the nature and forms of good magic that have been thus far discussed show a characteristic African pattern, the presence of the factor of medieval European magic is evident, though this is not as sharply identifiable here as in the functioning of the less pleasant aspects of these supernatural powers. That this merging of two traditions is fundamental in all Haitian magical practice must nevertheless be patent to all who have had experience with it, unless in their intemness on [179] 789



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ABOVE, At a vodun dance: those possessed whirling about the central post.
BELOW, Making the vodun drum: describing the sign of the cross with lighted
candles over the unheaded bodies.

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ected with them, much of African tradition which has carried over into Haitian religious life has been retained in pure form. Yet the intrusion of Catholic custom into these African patterns—often noted, though generally in passing—also must be studied if the significance of the forms of Haitian folk-religion is to be grasped. That this aspect of vodun has received the scant attention it has had is probably to be ascribed to two causes.⁸ The first takes the Catholic element for granted, so that even where a particularly dramatic element of Catholic practice is seen in an African setting, such as a crucifix or the portraits of the saints on a vodun altar, specific mention is made of this without attempting to dissect its historic or psychological role. The second reason for the comparative disregard of Catholic influence is that for Europeans it is a commonplace. Spirit possession and sacrifices, African song and drum rhythms are more "exciting" than prayers or hymns of the Church. Underlying both these causes is the deep-rooted and unquestioned assumption that, in contact with any non-European culture, the patterns that govern European behavior must prevail. Consequently, is it not in the nature of things that Catholicism should have taken root in the vodun cult? Is not rather the matter to be stressed that African traditions should have been retained at all? That the process should actually have been one of amalgamation rather than of dominance is rarely taken into account. Yet to go deeper into the significance of this process in Haitian life is to open far-reaching vistas.

An outstanding sanction taken by the vodun cult from Catholicism is that of the baptismal rite. Though ceremonies of consecration are a commonplace in Africa, and the African ritual of washing the head—*lavé tèt*, as it is termed—has not been forgotten, in Mirabalais the importance of baptism as a means whereby human beings obtain their place in this world and in the next has been carried over and applied to all matters of ceremonial significance. Thus just as in the lives of

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the saints of the Church the sacrament of baptism was a crucial rite, so the *loa* must be baptized before they become forces which act in a recognized and predictable manner. Just as the objects used in the rituals of the Church must be sanctified by being blessed and sprinkled with holy water, so in the vodun cult a *humfort*, the drums, the iron, and the rattle must all undergo a similar sanctification, not only that they may possess proper supernatural power, but more importantly that they may perform their functions in the very serious and African matter of calling the *loa* and placating the supernatural beings of the vodun cult.

Herein lies the importance of the *prêt sennne*. Since the official representatives of the Church not only have nothing to do with the vodun cult, but exorcise it on all occasions, the *prêt sennne*, as a man who can read the prayers of the Church, plays an indispensable role and to that extent is to be regarded as a functioning member of the vodun cult, despite the fact that he has no control over the *loa* and, as far as was observed, does not participate actively in their worship. At the same time, it must not be inferred that in borrowing "baptism" from the Church this rite has been elevated to the most important place in the ritual of the vodun cult, for though the *prêt sennne* must read prayers "from the book" and sprinkle his holy water, the actual "baptizing" is carried out by the *hungen*. In sanctifying a *humfort*, the end in view is to induce the *loa* to come after the baptism and to insure that no unaccountable or untoward deeds may come to pass within it. Similarly, though drums must be baptized with Church prayers and holy water that they may perform their allotted tasks, without the concomitant ritual of the *hungen* they would be no more empowered to call the gods than they were before the prayers of the Church were read over them. An analogous comparison can be made between the role of the *prêt sennne* and that of the *hungen* in the service. Since the world

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is ruled by God, it is necessary to invoke God with the ritual of His Church before the rites to placate the *loa* may begin. But the important business of the occasion is to placate the *loa*, and it is only when the *kungan* takes over from the *prêt* *savanne* that the series of rituals commence which, for the Haitian, hold emotional force and psychological value.

In the description of the baptism of a *loa* given in a preceding chapter, the use of Church ritual in bringing the African spirits under control will be remembered. No clearer illustration can be given of this merging of traditions than in a detailed account of the manner of making and validating vodun drums. These drums are of the characteristic African hollow-log type, with skin heads held in place and tuned by means of pegs, which are tied fast about the drumhead with cord. Before the tree which furnished the bodies was cut, an invocation was pronounced by their maker and an offering — a *mangé sec* — was made, that all the gods might come when called by the finished drums. A candle was lighted and *server* described about the base of the tree. Eggs, broken against the trunk, were rubbed on the bark; while both soft and alcoholic drinks were given as libations, since not all the gods desire the same refreshment. After the tree had been felled and that part of the trunk that was needed for the drums was cut off, the maker was free to proceed with shaping the bodies of the drums by first gouging out the inside of the trunk, then stripping the bark, and finally carving the characteristic foot at the base. Before the next step of boring the holes for the pegs was taken, *clairin* was poured inside each drum, at the entrance to the habitation of the maker, and toward the man's cornfield. The first hole bored in each drum was carefully marked, for this was the significant *manman*. Here the first peg is inserted; the skin head is first attached here; and here the cord about the head is first knotted; while it is the peg in this hole that must always be first struck when the completed drum is tuned.

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The drumheads were cut from a large ox-hide, purchased in the market place. In the early morning sunlight another "little ceremony" was performed before they were attached. Placing the three unheaded bodies of the drums in a row, with the iron in its place, the maker poured *clairin* before each, and having cut a native candle in three pieces, he took them in his left hand as he crossed himself, saying: "*Au nom d' Père, au nom d' Fils, au nom d' Saint Esprit.*" He then lighted the three wicks, and taking each lighted candle in turn in his right hand, he made the sign of the cross with it and attached it to the "mother peg" of each drum. There the flames were allowed to flicker for a moment before the work of heading the drums began.

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The hide was first attached to the "mother peg," then to the one opposite, and then to the two at right angles to the first pair. This is hard work, for to obtain the proper degree of initial tautness several men must strain at the resistant hide, and that is why four cuts are made where a peg is to go instead of the three that are needed, for frequently a strip breaks and the extra hole is used to re-thread the peg. The great drum has nine pegs, the one of medium size seven, and the small one six, not five, "because the *boula* is a thief, taking the beat away from the iron." The head was cut away from the rest of the great ox-hide only after it was in place. The final step was to knot the cord — braided the day before, of native sisal — to the manman peg of each drum, and then to twine it eight, six, or five times about their bodies.

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The drums, now finished, were then put aside for a week to allow the damp heads to dry, awaiting the final sanctification. During this period they could not be played. It was held unwise to do more than tap them lightly with the finger-nail to test their resonance and the extent to which the heads were dry. Meanwhile preparations were being made for the *lup-tum*. Drums, like human beings, must be clothed when they appear in public, and *vades*, apron-like garments, a white bro-

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cade for Damballa, a red print for Ogun, and a third, a flowered blue material, for all the other gods, were first made. They were ruffled at the bottom, with strips of the material, attached as are apron-strings, to hold them in place. Four eggs, three "native" candles, three white candles, white flour, corn flour, two cassava cakes, two biscuits, three small-sized loaves of bread, two bottles of *kola*, *clairin*, and holy water, were also provided for the baptism. Finally on the appointed day — a Saturday, so that the drums could afterwards be used for a vodun dance — the drums, drumsticks, and iron, with the dresses and the food that had been provided for the ceremony, were taken to the scene of the rite, a habitation where a *tan-selle* had been built for the accompanying dance.

The ceremony began at about five o'clock in the afternoon, the drums being dressed by their godmothers. Just as a child who is to be baptized in church must have godparents, so drums must have their godparents, and following the logic of this position, since the owner of the drums is regarded as their father, he uses the terms *compère* and *confrère* for those who have "stood up" with his drums, just as he would for those who might sponsor his children. The *prêt* *sacré* first called for some twigs from an orange tree and a bit of cotton, as the drums, standing on end, were covered with a clean white cloth. Grouped about them and ranged behind the officiant were the owner and godparents of the drums, holding lighted candles in their hands, with which they made the sign of the cross from time to time. As the prayers began, the participants crossed themselves, and the *prêt* *sacré* sprinkled the drums with holy water, using a spray of orange-leaves. Among his prayers were the Credo, the Ave Maria, the Pater Noster, and the Salve, interspersed with hymns sung by the assembled group. After about half an hour of prayer the officiant, holding an egg in his hand, made the sign of the cross three times over each of the drumheads. Ordinarily the egg would have been broken, their contents rubbed on the drum-

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heads, and *clairin* poured over these, but on this occasion the rite was postponed, for the eggs would have dampened the drumheads so they could not have been played for the evening's dance. Yet this deviation from the strict ritual did not permit any laxity in meeting the obligation when promised — that is, the day following the dance.

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The *hungan* took charge as soon as the prayers were finished. Placing the drum to form a triangle on the ground, with the iron, rattles, and sticks near by, he put the offerings inside the space enclosed by the bodies, and with white cornmeal made *verver* about them, while at the foot of each drum he placed an egg; then, covering the drums with a clean cloth, he threw parched corn on it. From time to time he interrupted his silent invocations by ringing a bell held in one hand, until the arrival of the time for the vehement haggling over the price of his services, which interrupted the ritual.

(532)

This matter settled, he asked for the names to be given the drums, and proceeded to "christen" the small one *Gran Siligbo*, the middle-sized *Dumballa*, and the great drum *Ogun Shango*. At this point, were the owner desirous of having special powers given his drums, as is frequently the case, the *hungan* would endow them with a *n'ame*, or soul, at the same time instructing the spirit of the drums, called *kawdr*, in what was desired of it, and prescribing what must be given the drums by their owner to make their powers effective. But in this case no such *n'ame* was asked, and the ceremony continued.

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Summoning the gods, he lifted the cloth over the drums and instructed the "father" to pour water in three places between them, to set the drums on end, and to beat one of them. This was the *seconde*, called *Dumballa*, and its having been initially struck indicated that the god after whom it was named was most important for this set. This ended the ceremony of baptism, and the drummers took charge so that the evening's dance might begin, for now the drums were ready

CATHOLICISM AND VODUN

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for all uses to which those of their type are put. During their making and after their completion they had been sanctified by rites that vividly illustrate the merging of traditions in Haitian religion: by means of offerings to the African gods, and through baptism by the rites of the Church.*

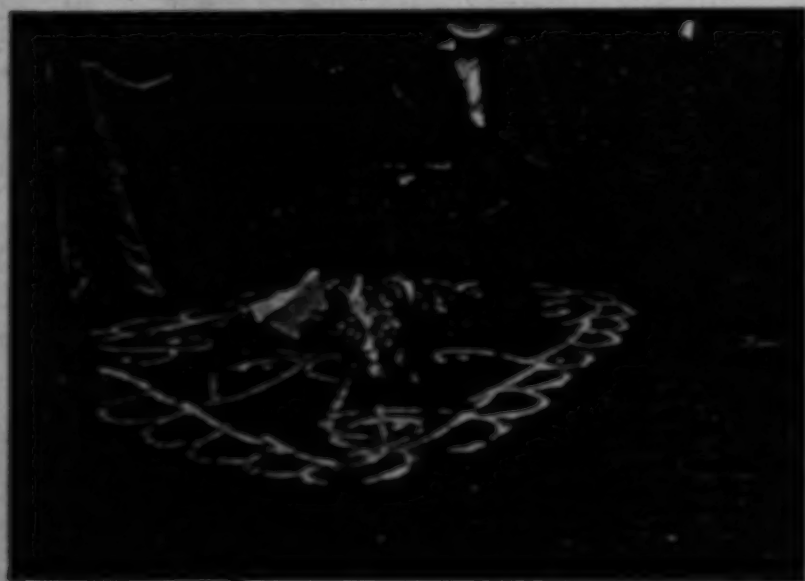
The *action de grâces* is another integral part of vodun ceremonialism that is essentially Catholic, since its lengthy service is composed entirely of prayers and hymns of the Church. As has been shown, the *action de grâces*, which precedes a vodun service, takes place before an "altar" which, important both then and at the later, more African rites, in itself documents in no small measure the combining of Catholicism and vodun. One, employed at a service not described in the earlier chapters, was covered with a red and white checked table-cloth, on top of which a smaller white cloth was spread.* Pinned to the canopy and to the front of the table-cloth were various chromolithographs of the saints; St. Michael attacking the Devil, Mater Dolorosa, St. James, the Virgin Mary and Jesus (the Assumption), and St. Expedition. In front of the representation of St. James stood a crucifix with the figure of Jesus, in accordance with the custom of never omitting to have one of these at any vodun ceremonial. The table bore many offerings; at the back were four bottles of soft drinks, with cups; while also to be seen were several hard rolls, an ear of corn, a dish containing eggs, and another holding, among other things, rice. One of the containers on the table held holy water, while candles for use both in the *action de grâces* and in the later vodun rituals lay beside this. Thus crucifix, candles, pictures of the saints, and holy water were combined in this ceremony with offerings of food and drink to be given the gods that the ancestors had brought from Africa.* The songs sung at the vodunistic portions of these services also reflect the psychological unity of Catholic and African elements in vodun worship. One of these declares:

* This altar is shown in the illustration facing p. 278.



ABOVE. Consecrating the drums: the "godfathers" and "godmothers" standing by with lighted candles as prayers of the Church are recited.

BELOW. The vodun priest employing African rites to complete the consecration of the drums.



(facing p. 282)

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778 turned to leave, word came that his house had burned
776 and nothing in it was saved. Later he suffered a paralytic
773 stroke from which he never recovered. Some say that the
771 American captain became ill and was sent to the States
769 "as a punishment for what he had done." Several days
767 later the sergeant was found mad, wandering in the
765 woods. Since he had fired under orders, however, his punishment was but temporary, and on being cured he returned to Ville-Bonheur to ask pardon of the Virgin. Today he lives in Mirebalais. When they saw the American ill, the priest paralyzed, the sergeant mad, and the presbytery burned, "public clamor" became so strong that both St. John and En las Palmas were reopened.¹⁵

778 In 1932 a cyclone at St. John tore down trees and houses and
776 hurt but did not kill the worshippers who had gathered there.
773 An eyewitness insisted he had seen the enormous whirling
771 cloud rise from the sacred place. He had no time to reach his
769 house, for with a noise like a cannon-shot the whirlwind came,
767 and an enormous oak tree fell just behind him — "I saw
765 death staring at me." Today he carries two scapularies to the Virgin to protect him.

778 The third sacred spot is at the falls themselves, where the
776 grandeur and beauty of the scene is such as to induce the religious thrill almost unaided, and where great numbers go in the course of their pilgrimage to Ville-Bonheur. There are two falls, situated at a distance of several miles from the village, one for Damballa and one for Aida Wedo, and it is believed that those who bathe in the sacred streams become possessed. It is said that the palms near by are sacred to the Virgin, but others hold that they are for Damballa. Many visit the falls on the day preceding the fête, but the largest throng hurries there immediately after the principal mass, when the greatest number of possessions and the most violent seizures by the loa occur. The falls, therefore, in association

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the vodunists this is not regarded as decisive proof of the power of Protestantism, for those immediately concerned it is held sufficient."

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What, then, of the attitudes held by vodunists toward the Catholic Church? The correlation of Catholic ritual with vodun practice made by Haitians is of utmost significance in this connection. In discussing the Church service, it was pointed out that church bells announce mass or any other rite, and this, it was explained, is for Legba — "*Toute cloche c'est pou' Legba, même l'église, oui* — All sounding of bells is for Legba, even in church," for he must be notified so that he can "open the gate" for God, Jesus Christ, and the saints. "*Nou' même nou' connai' ça. C'est Bon Dieu crée tout* — You yourself know that. It is God who created everything." It was also recounted how when the priest preaches, he is possessed by the *mystères* of the sacred Trinity, for does he not gesticulate and become excited like any other possessed person?

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Furthermore, it is believed that Gede, Ogun, and Damballa "are always at the church," often insisting that their worshippers take communion. Indeed, occasionally the loss of a woman may demand a Church marriage from a man to whom she is a *placée*. The sacraments of baptism, first communion, marriage, confession, and extreme unction are received by members of the vodun cult, though, as will be seen, when vodunists confess, they say nothing of their loss. The *hungan* themselves "are most often at the sacred table to take communion," and one particular *hungan* not only attended mass, but was seen continually employing his rosary in the vodun ceremonies at which he officiated. While Haitians from the southern peninsula stated that the *hungan* there do not go to church, it was pointed out at the same time that all other vodunists attend regularly.

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The principal resentment held by Mirebalais vodunists against the Church is for the cost of Church rites, and for the

heard in Haiti, but descriptive details of the practice abound." Elsewhere (p. 158) she speaks of "this big-glyt pigglyty pantheon" of loa, whose traits "none . . . [were] . . . able to describe . . . at all systematically." Price-Mars (I), 52, however, mentions the existence of a theology based on African beliefs not unlike that described here.

* Cl. Parsons (I), 168.

"Nowhere is the confusion with which writers on Haiti have approached and presented voodoo theological concepts better exemplified than in the passage found in Craig, 98-9; or 71, where a charm for working evil magic is spoken of as "something having to do with voodoo."

"Despite the importance of possession, one would hesitate before accepting in its entirety the somewhat simplistic approach of Dorsainvil that "le voodoo se centre à l'idee de la possession," (I), 173.

* St. Mary, I, 35.

"Parsons (I), 169, notes a, speaks of baptism, but states "lui Pétro is one you do not baptize, as you do other loa when they come . . ."—a custom at variance with Mirebalais procedure.

"Cl. Parsons (I), 165, however, where the meaning of *marre* is given "to get the spirit."

"See Parsons (I), 164-5, for a description of a "shrine" of a worshipper of the loa.

"Cl. Dorsainvil (I), 115 ff.

"This is undoubtedly the explanation of Sealbrook's "hermaphroditic god" called Papa Nelo (Gede-nilo), which he shows on pp. 9 and 10 of the plates of his book. As is indicated elsewhere in this volume, Gede, who does not partake of this characteristic in the least, has thus been usefully misunderstood by Sealbrook.

"Dorsainvil (I), 70-4, describes possession as a voodoo ceremony, and Wierus, 123 ff., also gives a description of a possession scene, but his account is pitched so hysterically as materially to lessen its usefulness for serious comparisons.

"(I) panthe, but especially 18-19, 28-41, 86-7, 111-12. A definition of voodoo more acceptable to those who approach social phenomena from an ethnological and historical point of view is to be found on page 190. Price-Mars (I), 123 ff., gives an extended criticism of Dorsainvil's hypothesis, though from quite a different point of

58 Services for the Los

796 He was the center of all eyes. Most of the time he danced alone, gyrating
787 recklessly. Sometimes he danced with his *hounguén*. Those who
742 watched clapped hands and uttered sounds imitating drums, for drums
746 were not being used in this service. The *houngan* carried the inevitable
chakete, or tiny hand bell.

(535) When newcomers arrived, Gblé greeted them by shaking both their
hands downward, vigorously, three times. Then he wiped their faces
with his kerchief, a ceremony which he repeated from time to time. He
danced with each of them a kind of *jeuvalé* step, simple, restrained, and
dignified. One of the visitors fell to his knees to converse with him.

The entire evening was built around the *houngan's* representation of
Gblé. Properly speaking, the *houngan* was not in a trance. He was in full
possession of all his normal faculties and was conscious of the slightest
inconveniences and disturbances. Several times the clay bowl of his pipe
fell from the red stem, scattering hot ashes on the ground, and each time
he paused to allow the *hounguén* to clear them away. Yet he was car-
ried away by his certainty that he was Gblé. The obvious conviction of
those who watched seemed to fortify him in his role. As the evening wore
on, he became more and more detached from his normal personality.
His psychic condition was not that of one who had been "mounted" by a
lao; it was, rather, a continuously progressive ecstasy.

796 Gblé is, in fact, more than a *lao* of the cemetery; he is a personification
764 of death in all its macabre, humorous, and unpredictable aspects. Death is
not merely a thing dying; it is an entity, a positive force in nature. Death is
Gblé Nibbo. I believe that when the *houngan* became Gblé, all who had
crowded into his hut felt themselves to be in the presence of death itself.
Death, a dynamic, aggressive force, danced and personified among them,
talking the language of the dead and of old Africa.

796 Gblé is often stern, austere, and forbidding, but he has other aspects.
Haitians take amused pleasure at the terror he can strike into the hearts
of the mighty. An old Gblé song goes:

(539) Papa Gblé bel gèyèl
Papa Gblé bel gèyèl
L'habillé tout en noir
Pou' moi an pèché

L'habillé tout en blanc
L'habillé tout en blanc
L'habillé tout en noir
L'habillé tout en blanc

Papa Gblé is a handsome fellow!
Papa Gblé is a handsome fellow!
He is dressed all in black
For he is going up to the palace!

When he's dressed all in white
He looks like a deputy!
When he's dressed all in black
He resembles a woman!

796 According to tradition, the song had its origin in a march on the capital
742 by some *houngans* many years ago. The story is very old and no one
746 remembers many of the details.

Services for the Loa 59

remembers many of the details. But during the administration of President Louis Borno (1922-1930) there was a reenactment of the original march. There suddenly appeared in the streets of Port-au-Prince a crowd of Gblé mystics—houngans "possessed" by Gblé Nindin and attired in Gblé dress: tall black hats, long black tail coats, smoked glasses, black skirts over their black trousers. They carried flags, waved polka-dot kerchiefs, shook their ceremonial rattles, and paused sometimes to wipe the perspiration from one another's faces. They became the nucleus of a huge, noisy crowd moving up the hill toward the palace. Market women followed instead of going home; street gamins screamed and raced among them. Before they had arrived at the palace grounds they had taken on the semblance of a huge Mardi Gras band. They swerved through the gates of the palace grounds and along the drive, right to the steps of the palace itself. The guards, taken by surprise, waited helplessly for their officers to arrive.

At the palace door, the houngans demanded money from the president. Borno was in a dilemma. He was reputed to be sympathetic to Vodoun ritual but was only surreptitiously so. He feared the houngans, and he feared public opinion. What would the upper class of Port-au-Prince think, the Latin-culture Haitians? With Gblé's worst manners, the Gblé mystics cavorted on the palace steps. Finally Borno gave in. He sent the money out to them, and then the crowd of Gblés marched out of the palace grounds, waving their flags and shaking their rattles.

SERVICE FOR THE HOUNSI BOUALLE

This ritual of calling the loa to speak through the mouth of the Vodoun priest took place in the Bédouin section of Port-au-Prince. The houfou was situated in a congested slum area of the city, but the grounds around it were spacious. The houfou itself was small and unpretentious, and a crypt for the adjoining tunnel would easily have been mistaken for another small wooden house. The houngan was a heavy-set man with a black mustache. Quick to laugh and easy in his movements, he nevertheless commanded warm respect from the houssi and the other participants. His soft-spoken voice expressed assurance and authority.

There were a number of possessions in the course of the dancing, all more or less routine. Each time a possession occurred, the houngan came forward with his assou and bell, gave a pitcher of water and a candle to the possessed devotee, and conducted her through a ritual at the foot of the center post.

Later, one of the houssi came and sat at the houngan's feet. She was not possessed but obviously was in a state of high tension. Other arrivals brought from the houfou a wooden washbasin and set it on the ground

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70 Services for the *Loa*

272 of Haiti. But the route to it is through water. When the Haitians say
 273 "under the water" they do not mean under the sea. The ocean is re-
 274 garded as the special domain of Agwé, La Sènt, and a few related
 275 deities, but it has nothing to do with most loa. "Under the water"
 276 specifically means under the springs, the rivers, and the fresh-water lakes.
 277 Fresh water has the greatest of significance in relation to most of the
 278 Vodoun deities.

When a loa comes to visit his Haitian children he comes by way of the *chemin d'eau* (the water road)—that is to say, by way of the river, the waterfall, or the spring. Because the spring is the primary source of fresh water, it is the most direct means of contact with the land of the loa. Tales are heard everywhere of persons who, drawing water from the spring at night, heard the voices of loa or the sound of singing and drumming coming up from somewhere below. And virtually all the tales about human beings who visited the land of the loa describe them as descending into a river or disappearing into a waterfall.

The loa are accustomed to traveling by the "water road." And in all aspects of the Vodoun service, this "water road" is refreshed and replenished. When the road is dry, contact with the loa is diminished. When it is moist, the loa travel easily.

276 Thus, the houngan constantly uses water to enter and invite the
 277 deities. He holds a glass or pitcher of water at the center pole of his
 278 peristyle. He extends it toward the four cardinal points. He spills
 279 water at the foot of the center pole. He spills water in the hauser at
 280 the foot of the *plé*, or altar. He sets a pitcher of water at the gateway of
 281 his *Akashien*. And often, during a service, he pours a pathway of
 282 water in the dust from his gateway into his peristyle. Within nearly
 283 every hauser there is at least one *banis*, or pool, dedicated to the loa
 284 who is the *mait' caille*, the master of the house. These pools are care-
 285 fully filled with water drawn from the springs. They are places of rest
 286 and refreshment for the deities whose names or portraits are inscribed
 287 on the walls above.

288 Sometimes rites and services are held at the site of the spring, the
 289 houngan and his entourage marching down to it from the hauser for
 290 the occasion. So, too, there are annual pilgrimages to waterfalls such
 291 as *Saint d'Eau*, where the loa mount their "harvest" in profusion.

292 Within the hauser, during a service, the cult priest and the servers
 293 pour "libations" of water on the earth, so that the loa may be refreshed.
 294 And virtually without end, the hauser is the scene of ritual ceremonies
 295 in which the loa is bathed and thus "renewed" in the hands of his
 296 servants.

297 [For footnote, see Category 14, P. 351--Analysis]

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with one of his children as he had agreed. That night his oldest child died. The next year to the day, his second child died. And the third year, the third child died. On the fourth anniversary, the man's wife died. On the fifth, he himself died. The djib of Trou Fourban had collected his debt.

Another great djib lives on the northern mountain called Morne Ronde. A man of Cap-Haïtien was said to have made a compact with him for wealth. One day there was a great hubbub in front of the man's house. A crowd gathered and stood peering inside his door. What they saw was a rain of money falling down from the rafters. The floor was covered with ten-guarde bills. When the *gendarmes* came to investigate, they stood at the doorway in awe, watching the money float to the floor. The man finally closed the door. That night he moved away, and no one in Cap-Haïtien ever saw him again.

The djib are insatiable. For their favors—which range from providing wealth and political position to destroying one's enemies—they always demand more in return than the recipient has counted on. Catholic ritual is called upon in some instances to break the djib's chain of demands.

Some tales are told in which human beings outwit the djib, particularly the lesser ones; but more often than not, the djib have the last laugh. During the big hurricane which hit Haiti in 1954, a huge landslide occurred near the place called Bayè Roche in the La Selle Mountains. An entire village was wiped out, covered by the falling rocks. Throughout this region the disaster was attributed to the action of a djib reputed to live in one of the nearby caves. Many lost cattle were found wandering near Bayè Roche, and they were believed to be people whom the malevolent djib had transformed into animals.

The height of bravado is to demand to be confronted with a big djib face to face. There is a song which goes:

Candit'm sifé ok!
Candit'm sifé djib nan Trou Fourban!
Candit'm sifé! (R. 90)

Take me, oh!
Take me to the djib in Trou Fourban!
Take me!

There are still other supernatural creatures in Haitian lore who must be guarded against, such as the *dyablon*, the *revenant*, and the *lwa*. The *dyablon* is a female ghost who must live in the woods for a number of years before she can enter heaven, as a punishment for the crime of

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124 The Arts

531 used for wall hangings much as appliqué cloths are used in Dahomey.
 323 Near Cap Haïtien, in the north, ceramic workers make crude clay
 532 figurines of roosters, pigs, dogs, cows, and people. The "purpose" of
 194 these figurines is obscure, but it is likely that they are intended for use
 197 in Vodoun ritual, a number of them having been observed in hounfours
 322 in the vicinity of the town of Grande Rivière du Nord. In some mountain
 532 villages, canes carved with animal and human heads are commonly
 191 seen. Nor is the tradition of carving gourds and calabashes, popular in
 531 various regions of West Africa, altogether forgotten. The *cayambouque*,
 a divided calabash with the top ingeniously cut to fit into the lower part
 so as to form a sealed container, is sometimes covered with carved
 geometric designs, usually crude and haphazard but on occasion meti-
 culous. Until recent years the common *cha-cha*, or gourd rattle, was
 similarly carved.

322 Most of the visible traditional art is to be found in the environs of
 532 the cult temple. The inner walls of many hounfours are covered with
 344 ritual designs and symbols and portraits of the deities. On the altar,
 198 sometimes, crude wood carvings of deities are seen, along with forged
 iron objects, carved marasa bowls, and grotesquely shaped drumsticks
 known as *baguettes guinée*. All the wooden objects are characterized by
 a plainness that relegates them to the category of purely functional and
 expendable things. The wood carving of a deity is not an image, it is
 a representation; it can be sold or otherwise disposed of, even thrown
 away if infested with beetles, and another object can be used to replace
 it. The only concern of the cult priest in this matter is that the deity
 concerned should understand the situation properly and not take offense.
 Thus there is no strong feeling that the wood carving should be a
 realistic representation or that it should be "beautiful." One relatively
 antique wood carving, completely West African in style, was found some
 years ago in a hounfor near Léogane and is now in the collection of the
 Musée du Peuple Haïtien in Port-au-Prince (see fig. 57).

788 One of the most flourishing arts of the hounfor is the *vèvè*, or rit-
 532 ual drawing made on the earth in the course of a service. Most com-
 monly these beautiful and ornate designs are made with white meal or
 flour, and in a few of the cults, primarily the Pétro, lampblack and
 red brick dust are also used. The *vèvè* is made by the houngan or the
 193 mambo. With sure, practiced movements, the cult priest allows the meal
 to trickle through his fingertips onto the ground where the rites are tak-
 ing place, usually in the peristyle of the hounfor itself. The drawings
 he makes are composed of a multiplicity of cabalistic symbols—heart
 shapes, stars, interlocked V's, flags, abstract phallic forms, crosses, swords,

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machetes, circles, mortar shapes, and so on—each with its own specific meaning. Sometimes the *vèvè* becomes openly pictorial, and there emerges a ship for the loa Agwé, snakes for Damballa and Ayida, a bull for the loa Taureau, a knapsack for the loa Azaka, or even a portrait of a deity, perhaps smoking a pipe or holding a sword.

The *vèvè* is not a permanent record. It is made as an act of supplication or veneration, and once it is finished it has no further value. In the ensuing ritual and dance, the *vèvè* is obliterated by the feet that pass across it. At the hands of one houngan, this invocational act results in a crude, even childlike, design. At the hands of another, it produces a drawing of beauty, integration, and highly developed form.

The drum-making craft, too, has offered an unbroken sequence of opportunity for satisfying artistic urges. The drum has a traditional form that cannot be tampered with; its shape is predetermined by its function, by the log from which it is hewn, and by existing standards. And yet, the drum maker has found it an object on which he can devise new decorative motifs, and he may even give it personal uniqueness. Some drums have styles that may be associated with specific regions of the country, others bear the stamp of the individual artist. Paint has been used on Haitian drums for a hundred years or more as a complement to carving. One assotou drum dating from the earliest days of the Republic, and now preserved in a collection owned by the Bureau of Ethnology in Port-au-Prince, is decorated with a medallion showing the Haitian coat of arms, grenadiers, red and yellow snakes, and a sun with a face. This magnificent instrument, apparently the only one of its age and kind to have survived the years, is one of Haiti's art treasures.

The *coussin*, or calabash bowl, of the houngan rites is another object which is decorated with motifs. Abstract designs, ritual symbols, and sometimes human and animal figures are painted on the inner or concave surface of the bowl.

The rural traditional arts of Haiti have had a belated impact on the arts of the city. Within the past fifteen years there have appeared a number of painters, sculptors in wood and ceramics, and ironworkers who constitute an art movement sometimes referred to as the Haitian "renaissance." Many of these artists draw heavily on national lore and legend for inspiration and subject matter. Some of them are men who came only recently from villages or distant farms. Their work adorns many public buildings in Port-au-Prince and is eagerly sought by art collectors. Members of the elite class who once looked with embarrassment on the "primitive" countryside are finding increasing respect for the potentialities of their country cousins.

THE HAITIAN PEOPLE

proper control, as they should be. If an unwanted god persists in mounting an individual, the pertinacious one is commanded to go away or the victim himself is sent home until he can recover his own personality. Many people strongly resist possession when it is imminent. Judged by our own standards, possession of the Vodun variety could certainly not be called normal; judged by Haitian standards, however, it would be absurd to call abnormal an experience known and approved by the majority of the community.²⁹

Possession occurs either at the service or at the dance. Here again the white man has nothing in his religious experience to enable him to comprehend the pattern of Haitian religion. The service corresponds nearly enough to the Catholic Mass or to more realistic sacrifices in ancient Jewish rites, but neither of these faiths nor any other the white man knows well has dancing for religion's sake. In Vodun, however, the dance is of equal importance with the service.

In the tiny *houmfort* (also spelled *houmfort*) of the priest, which is little more than a hut with earthen floor, the service begins. To call this structure a temple is at once to make it too imposing and to confuse the white man in his attempt to understand the scene; it is no more of a temple than was a tiny primitive early Christian church. Most *houmforts* in Haiti would be crowded if twenty people were present. At one end is an altar, more or less resembling the high altar in a Catholic chapel; on it are placed a crucifix, flowers, candles, fruit and food, wine, lithographs of Catholic saints, and whatever other objects, Catholic or Vodun, local practice may dictate and individual taste prefer. Upon the floor are traced formal cabalistic patterns, generally in corn meal, both to fend off evil influences and as required by the particular loa. The officiants may be male or female or both. To the service ordinarily come only the members of the family and their specifically invited guests; neighbors and friends will attend the subsequent dance.

A student of Catholicism would find in the first part of the service a great deal of ritual borrowed from the Church. The blessing, genuflections, making the sign of the cross, responses, and the like, all clearly show a Catholic background which accords well with certain objects upon the altar. Imperceptibly the strictly Vodun element obtrudes itself. The loa are asked whether they will accept

29. The statement of the two sides of this controversy may be found in Desminvil, *op. cit.*, throughout; and in Henikovic, *op. cit.*, particularly pp. 146-147.

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the sacrifices; food is set before the sacrificial animal, and if this food is eaten by the creature or creatures, it is known that the loa is satisfied. Then comes the actual sacrifice of the animal, a slaying neither ostentatious nor dramatic, since often it does not occur in the house—often in the forest. It is at this juncture that possession is looked for. The loa, by seizing one or more of his devotees—or, if possession fails, by the divination of the priest—makes known his desires. The demands of the loa are likely to be modest: a candle, a special article of food, certain specific attentions. Occasionally he insists upon an impressive sacrifice. Whatever his desires, they must be gratified or else the loa will mildly harass the family; long refusal will produce anger and full vengeance. If the god is Rada, his sacrifice will be white, red, or vari-colored; if he is Pétro, he will wish black or gray animals—chickens, turkeys, goats, bullocks.

The service itself, then, is entirely religious in nature, consisting wholly of ceremonies and rituals conducted by officiating priests, with the purpose of restraining or pacifying gods who may have been pursuing a family with misfortune, or gratifying those who have made it happy. The dance following the service apparently expresses the joy of the family at dangers averted and gratitude for blessings bestowed.

In contrast to the private character of the service, the dance has all the appearance of a social event. Invitations to it are sent all over the countryside. People attend for good fellowship, gossip, and the sheer delight of dancing, but in the background one is always aware of a religious element as well. The dance is held in a specially constructed *tannelle*, a roof of boughs and leaves supported by uprights. Drums are not always used at the earlier service, but no dance could be held without them. The crowd drifts in slowly, so that the dance may be long in getting under way. The best drummers in the community may not arrive until after two or three hours. Three drums of different sizes, all properly baptized, set the rhythms, and sometimes gourd rattles embroider a commentary upon the beat. Whereas at the service possession comes as a result of the priest's invocations, at the dance it is inspired by the drumming. Each loa has his own particular rhythm, so that as soon as it is determined what god has seized upon a dancer the drummers take up the rhythm of that god. The officiant immediately rushes to the mounted person with a calabash of water and a candle; by following the "horse" around and

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HISTORICAL BACKGROUNDS

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themselves and their families economically and socially. Property was important, so they took pains to insure the legitimacy of their heirs; color was crucial, and so they regulated the marriages of their children to be sure there was no reversion to the black strain. They guarded their fortunes solicitously, provided their daughters with dowries large enough sometimes even to lure a white husband, educated their sons in Paris—behaved, in short, as if they had been pillars of society in provincial France. Like the white planters, the male affranchis often had relations with slave women, but even more rarely than whites were they seduced into marriage with women of the lower orders.

When the slave insurrection and its aftermath freed the half-million blacks in Saint-Domingue it was not to be expected that European middle-class morals and practices should suddenly prevail. Modern usage emerges from the womb of tradition. Neither in Africa nor in the colony had tradition taught the blacks respect for monogamy or for marriage entered into by religious ceremony. If the ex-slaves had reverted to their Dahomean, Congolese, or other African background, they might have introduced the bride price; but to pay a bride price is to assume the existence of wealth, an assumption contrary to fact among the ex-slaves in Saint-Domingue of the 1790's, and Haiti of the 1800's. In neither Dahomey nor the Congo was there much ceremony at the union of a couple; what there was consisted mostly of singing and dancing. If, on the other hand, the people went only by what they had observed in slave days, there was no tradition of binding union or strict codes, as we understand them. A man knew when to stay away from another man's woman; children remained near their mother—these two statements almost cover the situation as of 1796 among the newly freed slaves.

Toussaint, apparently a conventional person in what concerned social behavior, wished his people to be "moral." He instituted a time of "holy masses, mystic communions, biblical psalms, and divine ecstasies" for his private edification, and recommended the same for his people. He could not possibly have instilled into them a desire for Christian marriage, however; even if he could, priests would not have been available for the wholesale marrying of scores of thousands of men and women. Local records of weddings at this period are very scanty.

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789 MAGIC--practices reflecting confidence in the ability to manipulate supernatural forces; magical techniques of weather control (e.g., rain making); magical rites for increasing the food supply; exorcistic practices (e.g., driving off evil spirits with noise); potent formulas, incantations, and spells; curses; miracles; prevalent types of magic (e.g., imitative, contagious); concept of magical force; functions and social significance of magic; noneupernatural magic (e.g., wonder-working, jugglery, legerdemain, fire-walking); etc. See also:

Magical rites in the food quest	78	Magical rites at harvest	784
Magical rites in agriculture	79	Luck magic	777
Magical rites in the reproductive cycle	80	Concept of mass	778
Magical or enchantments	845	Prevalence of ontological reasoning	811
Magical rites in warfare	720	Belief in magic in science	813
Sorcery, witchcraft, and evil eye	794	Love magic	832
Therapeutic magic	761, 765		

to speak the special "languages" of their particular cults. One aspect of this initiation,² which has been carried over almost unchanged into some parts of Haiti (though not into Mirebalais) is the ordeal by fire, in which the novice must plunge his hand into a pot of boiling cornmeal and rest his foot on the red-hot stones which support the pot.

The role of the family deities has already been given; of the third category, that of the personal forces, one finds first of all the soul, of which each individual is conceived as having three. More important is the cult of Fa, or Destiny, which came to Dahomey from the Yoruba, and is a part of a widely spread system of discovering the destiny of a man that characterizes not only West Africa and the remainder of the continent, but most of the Old World. In Dahomey today this end is carried out by assessing the significance of the various permutations and combinations of sixteen palm kernels "thrown" by the diviner. In addition there exist traditionally earlier and less "official" methods of divining, which in the main are those which have survived in the New World.

Intimately associated with both the soul and the destiny of man is the deity who is at once a member of the great pantheon and one of the most personal of all the gods, Legba, whose African importance is attested by the extent to which he is today worshipped in many parts of the New World, and by his universality in Haiti. From the point of view of Dahomean philosophy Legba may be regarded as the god of accident, who gives to man a "way out" in a world ruled by an otherwise inexorable fate. Gross in his appetites and capricious, he is, nevertheless, beloved by the Dahomeans, and though his name is usually erroneously translated by the European term "devil," no appellation could be farther from reality. Of particular significance for his role in Haitian life as guardian of the crossroads and of the *barrière* is his place in Dahomean theology, since it is said: "Before the gods can

²[i.e., The initiation of devotees by priests into the religious cults of Dahomey-Akpa]

000 powers which actuate their charms are variously ascribed to Legba, the Earth gods, and, most importantly, the "little folk" of the forest. Acceptance of the power of magic, however, is by no means confined to Africa, for it is characteristic of all the Old World, if not universal. Hence, as will be seen, the belief in magic held by the Africans who were imported into Haiti met with the corresponding beliefs of the Europeans who were their masters, so that today Haitian magic represents almost a complete merging of these two.

17 This, then, in briefest survey constitutes the culture which predominantly gave the Haitian people the African elements found in Haiti today. But the types of Europeans and of European behavior with which the slaves came into contact are also important and must next be examined, for it was these European patterns that, under contact, impinged upon the African habits of thought and action in such a way that, merging with the aboriginal customs, the Haitian culture found today was eventually shaped.

WORKING THE AMALGAM

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attitudes of these writers were in the main far from sympathetic toward Haiti, and their interests extended but little to the customs of the great masses of Haitians. That the fear of slavery was still alive in the early part of the nineteenth century is apparent from an incident related by Mackenzie: "that, some decades later, the sense of racial differences continued to exist is evident from folk-sayings about the characteristics of whites, mulattoes, and Negroes recorded by St. John." The concept of rank seems to have maintained itself in its full flavor, with no lack of social classes in Haitian urban society and no lack of vigor in perpetuating the earlier prejudices of caste.

The majority of the population remained on the land, for by 1830 the great estates had been completely broken up, and were cultivated in the main by small concessionaires. The dress of these country inhabitants seems to have remained much as it had been under French control, and the emphasis on good manners that so marks African social intercourse had been retained to such an extent that St. John, no admirer of the Haitian people, was forced to remark upon it. "Markets which were conducted in African fashion had been established, and these were supplemented by itinerant peddlers. The institution of *placage*, a reconciliation of African plural marriage with the monogamy of European custom, of which more will be said in a later chapter, was known in the early days of independence. The rites of birth and death were marked with their special ceremonies, and in both instances it can be seen that the African elements of the cultural heritage were not being forgotten. Dancing continued as the principal form of recreation, and to the traditional dances, which still persist, were added European styles."

Above all, African religious customs were being observed. Vodun rites continued to flourish and magic was practiced as in the days preceding independence, as is to be seen from the notorious and all too often repeated tale of the "Congo bean

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new," which has continued current from the time of its publication by St. John until today.²² Yet African religious practices were being constantly combated by the Catholic Church, for even in the period of revolt the priests had remained largely unharmed, and when Christophe was elevated to the throne, he appointed two archbishops. After the establishment of the Republic, Catholicism continued as the State religion, so that by the early nineteenth century, as Mackenzie mentions, thirty-eight clergy were active in Haiti, all under the control of the Bishop of Santo Domingo, and all presumably nominated and paid by the President of Haiti.²³ Though for a period there was an attempt to develop a national Church, the missionary work done during the colonial days left too strong a tradition of Catholicism to be overcome, and consequently a Concordat was signed with Rome in 1860, which has remained in effect ever since.²⁴

178 Though the story of the cultural history of Haiti between 1804 and the present cannot thus be more than sketched, yet the background is known, and enough can be gathered from accounts of Haitian life during this interval to enable us to see that the varied cultural impulses were shaping the lives of the people throughout these years. With some understanding of the roots of the resulting culture in French and African traditions, then, let us once more turn to the valley of Mirebalais and consider the life of the Haitian peasant as it is lived today.

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THE SETTING OF HAITIAN LIFE

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Dead: I have worked; I have planted this seed. Make it yield for me, that I may make offerings to the Mysteries, the Saints, the Twins, the Dead."

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At the entrance to the field the cranium of a horse, a mule, or a burro may be erected on a pole as magic against evil, and a wooden cross to which limes are attached may also be raised to protect against any expression of envy that might place a spell upon the growing plants. Finally, if there is any reason to believe that evil magic may have been invoked against the owner, a *hungan*, or voodoo priest is summoned to make a charm to ward it off, and, with a little ceremony, he inserts this charm in the middle of the garden or at its entrance.

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In addition to this, first fruits must be given as an offering to the supernatural forces whose goodwill has permitted a bountiful yield, particularly in the case of staple crops such as maize and rice. As the first heads of maize are brought in, they are roasted, and the kernels are cut from the cobs. The head of the household then throws them to the four cardinal points either in the garden or before his house, and as he does this, he pronounces an invocation such as the following:

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"*Jesu Christ, les Saints, les Marassa, les Morts: M' jef mai' bai' ou, c'est pou' toujou' m' gagne bai' ou, et pou' m' gagne courai' pou' trani' a'c p'tit' moin, a'c femme moin, a'c pareul' moin, a'c toute famille. Conserve m' pou' m' pas malade, pou' m' toujours jien pou, m' bai' ou. — Jesus Christ, the Saints, the Twins, the Dead: I throw maize for you, that I may always have some to give, that I may gain courage [strength] to work, and also my children, my wife, my relations, and all my family. Care for me that I do not fall ill, so that I may always have [something] to give you.*"

After this ritual the new crop is available to its owner for whatever use he may care to make of it.

THE SETTING OF HAITIAN LIFE 81

in Port-au-Prince, native or "cr le" rice, red beans, and olive oil. The rice and beans are cooked separately, as are the yams and the two kinds of salt fish, each being seasoned with oil, salt, and pepper. The ordinary plates or calabashes on which food is offered the *lou*, or African deities, and the characteristic special double plates used in the twin cult, are prepared by rubbing them with olive oil. When the food is ready, it is placed in the proper containers in a closed room, and the family gather and say prayers of the Church — the Pater Noster, the Ave Maria, and the Credo — after which the *lou*, the twins, and the dead are called to come and eat. From midday until after sunset the room remains unopened, so that these beings may partake of the offerings placed there for them. Finally, when darkness has fallen, the family enter, and the food, whose essence is believed to have been consumed by the spirits, is eaten.

At times when a garden yields but little, the owner may suspect that black magic is the cause. He thereupon tries to recall any of his neighbors who might have occasion to feel envious of him, or those with whom he may have quarreled. He does nothing overt at this time except to watch for signs of hostility on the part of the suspect, but when the time for the next planting arrives, he not only obtains a strong charm to protect his own garden, but if he is particularly exercised and thinks his suspicions are well justified, he may set a counter-charm in the field of his neighbor who he believes has harmed him. This would only be done in exceptional cases, where, for instance, the crops of one cultivator had failed when the fields about his had yielded well; for, in the main, garden magic is directed toward protective rather than toward malevolent ends.

A certain proportion of the harvest is reserved for use at home and the remainder is sold in the markets. Since these markets, which as the primary channel of distribution rank with farming in their importance in Haitian economy, they may next be considered.

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*malin esprit barre chemin qu'en moment délivrance
main ap' rive. Nou' touz les Invisibles, les Saints, les
Morts, Merens, vini assisté main jou'a.*—I ask you all
to come deliver me, that you open the way for me, that
you do not allow evil spirits to bar my path when the
time of the delivery approaches. May you all, Invisible
Beings, the Saints, the Dead, Twins, come to my aid on
that day."

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Should one of the couple be a devotee of Damballa or Er-
zile, both of them jealous gods, a chicken or two is added to
the customary offerings, and some gift pleasing to the god,
such as a dress or suit of his sacred color, is made him. Nor-

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mally no further precautions need be taken. If, however, the
pregnant woman has had one or two miscarriages, she and her
husband go to a voodoo priest, preferably a woman, and obtain
a "medicine" to be used in bathing the abdominal and vag-

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inal areas as a precaution against *mauvaises aires*, the were-
wolves believed to consume children in the womb. If the preg-
nancy this time terminates successfully, some of the same
medicine is rubbed on the child shortly after birth and several
times during the ensuing weeks, but should the infant later
fall ill, the voodoo priest brings herbs and makes a smoke-fire
to drive away the werewolves that are believed still to be
hovering about.

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At the onset of labor, if either the father or the mother of
the unborn child is vowed to Damballa, another sacrifice is
made to this god and to the spirits of twins, giving a *coqueri*
and one or two chickens and pigeons to each. If a voodoo
priest has determined what deity protects the child, a sacrifice
is also given this spirit, and prayers are said to the spirits of
twins, the dead of the families of both the man and the woman,
and all other supernatural beings, saints of the Church and
voodoo gods alike.

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Meanwhile the woman has been placed on the ground on

846 or to get her feet wet. When possible, however, she waits for from fifteen to twenty days before doing this kind of work, and, in any event, she will not bathe in cold water until more than a month has passed. A week or two after giving birth she may resume her selling in the market, and two months after her child is born she will take up work in her garden.*

852 (851) During this period of the mother's recovery the child is ritually introduced to his world and to the spirits which govern it. Three or four days after the cord drops, the midwife, water and a candle in hand, presents the child to the sun and the four corners of the earth, speaking an invocation which none but women of this profession may know or hear spoken. The child is then carried into the courtyard before the house, though he may not be taken elsewhere for as many as three weeks. When he is taken across the threshold for the first time, he is cradled in the left arm of the one who carries him; in the left hand water is held, while the right hand holds a lighted candle. Water is thrown in three directions, outward from the door and to each side of it, as the child is taken about the outside of the house. This rite is repeated by everyone present at the time, but water is "thrown" only once.

854 (853) Though it is said by some that a child is not given a charm immediately after birth unless it is ill, it is nevertheless customary to place a cord about the neck of an infant on the day it is born, to remain there until some three or four years later, when it wears out and is lost. There is no difference of opinion, however, on the point that if a baby falls ill soon after birth, steps must be taken to give it spiritual protection. A vodun priest is called to make a charm for it to wear, while, in addition, another charm is placed in the house to guard its inhabitants against "all bad things," such as the evil eye — since this tends to give babies convulsions — demons, werewolves, or the "little folk" who bring bad magic. A folk against harm resulting from even unconscious envy is also provided, since an individual who admires a baby because of

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not come, the mother goes to a woman specialist who knows the herbs which are believed to induce the flow. When the mother is ill or tubercular, the infant is given to a wet-nurse. Once he has begun to nurse, he is fed whenever he cries, and as soon as he can sit up he is given the same food as

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the mother eats. For the first two or three months after the birth of her child a woman refrains from eating egg-plant, fresh fish — although she may eat salt fish — white beans or any others larger than Congo peas, pork, lard, and all fruit.

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The ears of a female child are pierced when she is about a month old for the gold ear-rings which are worn by girls and women of all ages. If the parents cannot afford them at the time, however, thread is placed in the holes until a sum sufficient to provide this important trinket has been accumulated.

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A child is taught to sit up beginning with the end of the third or fourth month, and by the time he is six or seven months old he can sit quite well; girls are believed to be more precocious than boys in acquiring this skill. When about ten months old, or sooner, an older sister, a little girl, or the father or mother takes the child by the hand and teaches him to walk, later allowing him to hold one end of a stick for support. A child is never left alone, for fear of the evil eye or of werewolves, so that a mother does not even cross the threshold of her house without taking her baby with her, while if for some reason she cannot avoid leaving her child while she is in the yard, an empty bottle is placed near its pillow as a protective device. Teething is a matter of importance, since the attitudes of the parents toward a child may be determined by the first teeth to appear. If these are cut in the upper jaw, it is said that the child's mother will survive his father, and when this occurs, the mother takes every precaution to conceal the fact from her husband, so he will not hate the child. Others hold, however, that the appearance of an upper tooth first denotes that either the father or the mother is soon to die.⁶

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Instruction starts early in the life of a child. Beginning with

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the phrase: "This is natural." Children are not spaced, for normally a man resumes intercourse with his wife the second or third month after childbirth. Except for the drinking of coconut milk and salt, which is believed to be effective in preventing conception if taken before intercourse, contraceptives are not known to women, which means that pregnancies follow in rapid succession. Families are not too large, however, despite this, those numbering seven or eight children being rare, even in the hills. The reason for this is a high incidence of infant mortality, which is obvious despite the absence of vital statistics. Abortions are usually resorted to by young women, who sustain the operation done by the uncertain skill of an old woman, in the fear that bearing a child will later stand in the way of a desirable legal marriage. Some men, however, take the precaution of placing a grain of native salt on the tongue while having intercourse during an illicit affair, believing that this will be effective in preventing conception.

A childless woman first goes to a vodun priest, to have him determine by divination if a co-wife has not invoked magic against her. If her question receives an affirmative answer, she acquires a "counter-charm" to offset the effect of the other woman's magic. Should such a charm be ineffective, she would offer her prayers before the shrines of the saints and make pilgrimages to such sacred places as Saut d'Eau, there phrasing her petition to the Virgin in some manner such as the prayer overheard as a woman lighted a candle and held it in her hand before placing it on a sacred rock:

"Vierge Miracles, Manman, voilà, depuis six ans depuis qui moins marié; moin apé viye seul avec peuvre malheureux moin-a. Ça fait trois fois moin vini nan pié ou. Pas 'blié mandé moin fait ou, pour charité, moin ou petit pitite. Moin tu minnin li ba ou. Moin apé parti, Manman, s' ou' pli, songé ça pitite m' mandé ou. —

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Virgin of Miracles, Mother, I have been married for six years; I am still living alone with my poor unfortunate one. This is the third time I come to you. For charity's sake, do not forget to send me a child. I have brought this for you. Now I am about to leave [out], Mother, please think of the little one I ask of you."

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werewolves as well as of the ingredients to concoct healing baths. Certain priests worship and control a large number of deities, as is shown by those which comprise the personal pantheon of a *hungan* from the valley of Mirebalais: Gedeñbo, Ezilié G4 Rouge; Ti Kita Demenbré; Simbi en Deux Eaux; Bumba Trois R4; Legba; St. Jacques; Ogun Ferraille, Ogun Balandjo, Ogun Ashade; Lemba; Aizan Kriké, Aizan Wedo, Aida Wedo, Damballa Wedo; Baron Samedi, Bon Trois Cornes; Congo Wangol, Malt' Mapou; Agan; Agwe, Agweto Woyo; Kadia-Bon; Sobo Gran'; l'Afrique Guinée. Whatever his ability, the *hungan* can cure only diseases "sent by man" — that is, those caused by magic — and by the *loa*, since against illness sent by God he can do nothing. Goup disapprovingly whispers how in more than one instance a *hungan* took advantage of his position and the trust of his clients, falsely to represent himself as able to cure an illness "sent by God" through stating it was due to magic.

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An important function of the *hungan* or *mambu* is to foretell the future, and it is as a diviner that the voodoo priest or priestess is most often employed. No major rite would be considered by a family unless divination were resorted to, but consultation is made for a far wider range of affairs than those of a purely religious nature, and no proposed undertaking of any importance in the secular field is begun without visiting a diviner to discover whether or not the fates are propitious. When divining, the priest is usually under possession by his gods, but other methods, such as gazing into a crystal or basin of water, may also be employed. Several divining séances were visited, but no description of them need be given here, since a number of accounts, including an especially full one by Parsons, are available.²⁰

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Though a certain hierarchy seems to exist among the voodoo priests in other districts of Haiti, in Mirebalais the organization of the cult is informal to an extreme degree.²¹ In the minds of the cult members, various priests in the same region

WHAT IS "VOODOO"?

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are differentiated according to the types of healing in which they have had the greatest success, and the "miracles" to their credit, such as a *hungan* who had achieved a wide reputation for being able to resuscitate dead children. One *hungan* of the valley is spoken of as having powers which rank him with the greatest in the land, but now that he is old, a nephew of his is being called upon to act in his place. In a relatively short time, say his friendly clients, he will take his place even among great *hungans* elsewhere.

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Under the *hungan* and *mambu* are assistants called *hunsis*, or sometimes, in the case of men, termed *adjanikon*. In some parts of Haiti, particularly in the plain of the Cul-de-Sac and the southern peninsula, there are degrees of initiation for the *hunsis*, which include the ordeal by fire that makes them *hunsis kanzo*.²⁰ In Mirebalais, however, the *kanzo* rite, though known by name, is neither required nor performed. The *hunsis* and *adjanikon* know the rituals in a general way, hold and wave the banners used to salute the gods, sing the songs for the *loa*, aid in bringing the possessed dancers out of their possessions, and perform such other ritual tasks as helping the officiating *hungan*. Some members of the cult group have special ability to sing large numbers of the ritual songs for any *loa* which may be called, while others perform the animal sacrifices. It is among these male assistants that the most expert drummers are found.

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This, then, constitutes an outline of that system of belief included under the term *vodun*. Once more, in summary, it may be emphasized that *vodun* is neither the practice of black magic, nor the unorganized pathological hysteria it is so often represented to be. The gods are known to their worshippers, and the duties owed them are equally well understood. The reward for the performance of these duties is good health, good harvests, and the goodwill of fellow-men; the punishment for neglect is corresponding ill fortune. On this basis of belief is erected the ceremonial of worship.

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CHAPTER XII

MAGIC, GOOD AND BAD

In opening any discussion of Haitian magic, the fact must be stressed that magic, though but one of the forces active in the universe, is a system in itself. As such, it is a thing apart from the *vodun* cult, a point which must also be emphasized, for although most writers draw a perfunctory distinction between magic and *vodun*, this distinction, once stated, is too often promptly lost sight of.¹ At the same time, the differences between the worship of the *loa* and the practice of magic must not be so juxtaposed as to name the second as the antibody of the first. For, though some of the *loa* can work harm, and some of them, indeed, are primary forces behind the working of evil rather than beneficial magic, the good and bad they do is general in nature. Magic, on the other hand, whether good or bad, always operates in very specific instances: to cause a given woman to love a given man, or to make a certain field of a certain enemy yield poorly.

Yet these distinctions, when drawn, are found in practice to be neither as sharp nor as consistent as the foregoing statements might imply, especially since the system of magic is empowered and validated by many of the *loa*, as well as being closely affiliated with the cult of the dead. The phenomenon dealt with here, and its not illogical contradictions, arise, however, from the fact that the realistic African world view has by

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789 no means given way to that separation of the categories of good and evil that governs much of European thinking. A *loa* that helps a man when friendly toward him may, if slighted or vexed, set about to do him harm, or, at best, merely remain passive when danger is to be averted. For the *loa*, like human beings, are creatures of mood and may take umbrage at some act which had created no displeasure before. Similarly, not all uses of magic are necessarily reprehensible, something at once evident when it is pointed out that much of Haitian folk-medicine derives its psychic force from its magical basis. In short, Haitian belief, of which magic forms a part, does not allow a world view drawn only in blacks and whites. All tones of gray are found, and these merge one into another almost imperceptibly, as the fortunes of a man wax and wane during his lifetime.

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789 That the Haitian envisages his universe in terms other than those of warring and changeless powers of good and evil should not be taken for a moment to mean that he fails to draw a clear distinction between the benevolent and malevolent forces behind the magic employed in specific instances. This realization is reflected in the terminology he gives the charms that are the outer symbols of these supernatural powers, the *garde*, *arrêt*, and *drogue* protecting him against harm, the *wanga* being the carrier of dark magic, and the antisocial agent. The actuating forces behind these charms come from all important members of all groups of *loa*, to say nothing of God and the saints of the Church; but the charm itself is a thing which results from the control of these by man himself: "Wanga, moun qui fait ça — It is men who make wanga."

789 One other point may here be clarified, since it has made for confusion: namely, the fact that when the Haitian employs the term *magic* he does not mean what the European signifies when using the word "magic." To the student, the vast body of Haitian magico-medical practices, prescribed and administered by both those who know how to manipulate the super-

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natural and those whose remedies are based principally on an inherited knowledge of the curative powers of herbs and roots, are all to be gathered under the rubric of magic. For the native, however, a difference of the first order exists between a *trailement* to heal an illness, and magic employed to gain an end, protect from harm, or injure another, even though the same gods be called upon to validate the healing remedies employed to effect cures as are used to actuate a *garde* or a *wanga*.

The belief in magic figures importantly even in the early writings on Haiti. Thus St. Mery says:

"The Negroes believe in magic and that the power of their fetiches has followed them across the sea. . . . Little rude figures of wood or stone, representing men or animals, are for them things of supernatural power, and they call them *garde-corps*. There are a great number of Negroes who acquire absolute power over the others by this means. . . ."

It is reported that in the early days the black and mulatto concubines of white Haitians often had recourse to reputedly potent charms to insure their attraction for these men and to guard themselves against their white mistresses. One Hyacinthe, a leader in the uprising of 1792, "believed that an ox-tail which he always carried in his hand had the power of preserving him from bullets; he was regarded as invulnerable." And numerous citations could be given to show not only that since that day the use of charms persisted, but that comment on this use has come to be outstanding in all descriptions of Haitian life.

To understand the various types of practitioners of magic, it is necessary to refer again to the concept that any force habitually actuating evil magic may be directed toward less malevolent ends, while any benevolent supernatural power may exert itself to bring harm. Hence those who make *arrêts* to ward off evil from their clients, or *gardes* to protect them

789 from its ill effects after the evil has been exorcised, must also
789 know the forces they are combating if they are to achieve any
791 measure of success. By the same token, practitioners of black
793 magic must know what steps may be taken to counteract their
754 *wangas* so that, if necessary, they can in turn call forth super-
756 natural emissaries to strengthen the evil impulses originally
set in motion. In this sense, therefore, the *hungan*, the *gan-
gan*, the *bocor*, and the *caplata* employ essentially the same
techniques and operate with the same forces, the difference be-
tween them being one of degree rather than of kind. " *Hun-
gan, c'est magazin. Gagné un pile marchandise* — The *hun-
gan* is like a shop. He has a lot of merchandise," says the
Haitian, quoting a well-known proverb as he makes the point.

[538]

In the main, it can be said that though the *hungan* and the
gangan practice magic, their main preoccupation is with the
loa — the maladies they send to affect a man and his posses-
sions — while the *bocor* is concerned almost exclusively with
setting in motion the agents that actuate black magic, and the
789 *caplata* dabbles in anything that is wanted. One important
791 means whereby the sorcerer obtains his powers is the evil *loa*,
793 but there is this essential difference between them: the gods
795 of the *hungan* are family gods who come to him through the
421 natural course of inheritance, endowing him with the *connais-
425 sance* that gives him his control over the supernatural world,
while the *bocor* buys his gods. And when a god is bought, it
is always acquired so as to enhance the position of its owner at
all costs, despite the knowledge that the power thus purchased
is dearly bought, bringing its own eventual punishment.
Sometimes an ambitious *hungan* adds to his familial *loa* other
"purchased" gods, but this is resented by the deities who have
given him his powers, so that in time these benevolent powers
take all means to humble and crush him. Furthermore, gods
acquired in this way pass on to unwilling members of their
owner's family and, after a generation or two of mischief-
making, must be "restrained" or "banished." A number of

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points — or oblique designations — makes clear the distinction between the two, for the *bocor* invariably and certain *hungans* on occasion are called *nèg' mazi maza*, "Negro who wears his back to the front," or, again, those who "serve with both hands." Though by no means shunning the services of the practitioner, the Haitians of Mirebalais nevertheless look upon the working of magic with a cynicism that is reflected in the gossip about happenings that befall all who practice it, in any form, and particularly those who work evil magic. It is said: "The *hungan* often dies an evil death, and the *bocor* who makes *wanga* almost always. These people kill each other by magic"; or one hears of a woman who one day went to the cemetery to obtain materials needed for her unsavory work and was struck and killed by the thunderbolts which are believed to smite sorcerers.

To keep his reputation, a practitioner of magic, good or evil, must make continual demonstration of his powers. For example, in prescribing a magical cure, it is incumbent upon the *hungan* or *mambu* to foresee all eventualities, even where the directions are not followed, a prescription which is regarded as a strong check on the charlatan and is the reason why a practitioner is prudent in refusing to accept a case beyond his power to aid, since persistent failure to achieve cures will lose a *hungan* his reputation and his practice. Naturally, certain practitioners do not fail on occasion to turn the anxiety of a family over a serious illness to their own account, but inasmuch as the cures made by a man are the most adequate proof of his power, the feeling is that his clients have an unquestioned safeguard against chicanery. This point of view, it may be noted, is of undoubted importance in perpetuating a living faith in magic.

An example of how rapidly a practitioner of magic can lose prestige when some mishap occurs to him was encountered when an important *gangan* of the valley was brought into court charged with the theft of a pig which he claimed was

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to do. The *loa* would come, but they wouldn't give him the same *connaissance*."

One of the most important of the forces behind all magic is the *Mait' Carrefour*, the Master of the Crossroads. The possible identity of this *loa* with Legba, who guards the entrance to houses and is also thought of as a guardian of the highways, was a question that could not be satisfactorily resolved, though it seems most likely that the two are quite distinct, since Legba is but rarely called upon when magic is being performed. One Haitian versed in magic stated:

"The *Mait' Carrefour* is like the president. Legba is like a minister. God sent the *Mait' Carrefour*. He commands Baron Samedi. Before going to the cemetery to perform [black] magic you must pass the crossroads, and therefore he is able to restrain you if he is not properly worshipped. He commands Damballa. He commands the Rada and Pétro gods. He commands all the saints because all of these must pass the crossroads. Therefore when one has a *garde carrefour*, a person will die a death sent by God [that is, a natural death] and not one caused by magic or the *mystères*."

The *Mait' Carrefour* must be "paid" each year on All Saints' Day, when seven cents in copper coins are given and a white chicken is killed, cooked, and placed in a wooden container with rice, biscuits, cassava, potatoes, bananas, and other kinds of food, both cooked and uncooked, to be deposited at a crossroad with the statement: "Here is food; thank you for having cared for me. If evil *loa* wish to harm me, *Mait' Carrefour*, restrain them." As this is said, a candle is lighted and an invocation pronounced:

"Au nom de *Mait' Carrefour*; au nom de *Mait' Grand Bois*; au nom de *Baron Cimetière*! Jodia, premier la

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*Toussaint, voici un couvert mojn porté ba ou. Ou gardé
vol' enfant, comme vol' père et vol' mère dans la maison.*

— In the name of the Master of the Crossroads; in the
name of the Master of the Great Forest; in the name of
Baron Cemetery! Today, the first of All Saints' Day, here
are offerings I bring you. Guard your child as your father
and your mother in the house."

[788] *Clairin* is thrown three times at each fork of the crossroads,
and some is also sprinkled in the center and at each corner of
the container of food. Three bits of earth are finally lifted
from the corners of the crossroads and taken to the home of
the worshipper. Here they are put in a plate with *clairin*,
which is first lighted and then extinguished, so that the mem-
bers of the family can anoint themselves with it and receive
strength with which to face the new year.

● 789
821 Good magic has many expressions. Thus there is said to be
secret knowledge, transmitted in certain families from genera-
tion to generation, of how to control the rains. Those who
have control of magic of this sort are to be recognized when
they are seen to be completely dry while walking in a down-
pour. Generally such powers are used to insure a rainless day
for a *combite* or *service*, or to cause rain to fall the day after
a *combite* has made the field ready for hoeing, or when the
proper time for planting is at hand. Eventually, it is said, in
response to a temptation too great to be resisted, the possessor
[784] of such magic will put it to other, evil ends. Then sooner or
later the punishment for this abuse of his knowledge is visited
upon him, so that in the end he meets his death by being
struck by the avenging lightning.

789 The most powerful type of protective magic is known as a
drogue. One of the most potent of these — of the type referred
to by Léger in commenting on the ox-tail carried by Hya-
cinthe, or such a one as tradition holds Christophe possessed,
which gave him immunity from all but silver bullets — makes

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it possible for the owner to go to war without being harmed. Even were the possessor of such a *drogue* to be struck by a bullet, the wound would be a minor one; while the thrust of a machete or saber would leave him unscathed, poison placed in drink or food would be impotent, and a trap set against the warrior would be ineffective. Some *drogues*, it is held, allow the owner to disappear when trapped by enemies. For such an important *drogue* a special day, designated by its maker, is set aside for the observance of certain taboos, the most important being the requirement of sexual abstinence on that day.⁴ Some men possess as many as seven of these *drogues*, in which case one day every seventh week is reserved for each. Said a man who had taken part in the rebellion of 1918-20 against the Marine occupation: "I have a small, small *drogue*. I had it in the Caco fighting. I have need of a big one." When it was observed that there is no more fighting in Haiti, the reply came promptly: "A man must be prepared. Nobody knows what will come."

The grandfather of this man was said by him to have owned a *drogue* which came from Guinée. He knew how to resuscitate those who had met their death from unnatural — magical — causes; he had only to come to the *barrière* before the house where the body lay, call the name of the victim, and the dead would arise. He was once attacked when he was returning home with a purse filled with money he had won at cards, and his assailants beat him to death and threw him into a well. The next morning, when he was found, he revived in a few moments and asked to be buried beside the well. The following day one of the men who had assaulted him died; the next day another died, and so for five days, until all of them were dead.

Love-charms form an important category of good magic, also charms to aid in selling in the markets or in keeping a job or to hold the affection of a spouse. Old men are believed to have important magical powers for good, and one such

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person of great experience was pointed out who was believed able to stop a runaway horse without putting a finger on him. One widely spread type of charm is an *arrêt* against the *mal jòk*, or evil eye. Mention has been made of protective charms when the measures taken to guard growing crops were discussed, and also in connection with safeguarding the well-being of infants. The power in this latter type of *garde* often is made to reside in a seed on a string or chain, or a cross of beads sewed on cloth, to represent the four corners of the earth.

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Because charms are the outer symbols of magic, detailed examples of their making will give insight into the nature of charms in general. The first of these which may be described was a *garde*, made by a *mambu*, to relieve a pregnant woman whose milk had begun to flow before the birth of her child — a sign that an evil spirit had been sent her by an enemy, and that her delivery would therefore be fraught with danger.

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During the *séance* the *mambu* was continuously possessed by her god, *Ogun*, whose identity was shown by her whistling. Before the *mambu* as she commenced her incantation were some *clairin*, lighted red candles, a new piece of soap, incense, sulphur, garlic, light brown shoemaker's thread, an empty bottle, a bottle filled with a green, evil-smelling lotion called *baigne de mambu*, a chick, and three iron nails. As she tied the cord in knots she muttered her spell; then, taking the empty bottle, she put in it a bit of the incense, sulphur, garlic, some soap, some *clairin*, and some *baigne de mambu*. With the knotted cord she tied a cross made of two nails to the neck of the bottle, repeating her formula before she put it down. Instructing the pregnant woman to take the bottle, she said: "Speak into it and say everything you wish."

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She then took the chick, opened its beak, and wrote on it with a pencil, continuing the incantation the while. With the pencil she also made marks on the thighs, the wings, the upper joints, and the leg joints before she handed it to her client

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with the words: "Tell it what you have to say. Tell it that you are passing on to it all your pain, everything." When she had finished, the *mambu* once again took the chick, holding its head as she described three crosses on the ground with its beak. She now put some of the earth in which she had made the crosses into a white dish, returning the chick to the woman and telling her to speak to it again, and this time to expectorate three times into its open beak as she finished. The *mambu*, holding the fowl in one hand, thereupon poured some of the mixture from the bottle; and some *clairin*, in the plate that contained the earth, lighting the *clairin* with her free hand and directing the patient to rub her nipples with it. Then she returned the bottle to the pregnant woman, telling her to recount her need to it once more, and then to cork it.

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The *mambu* next chewed some of the soap and rubbed it over the cork to "seal" the bottle, saying: "When you send a letter through the mail, you seal it," and instructed the pregnant woman to place the bottle in her house and see to it that it was not uncorked, for in it was contained her life and the life of her child. "Open it before delivery and pass its contents over your abdomen." A cord was put about the waist of the woman and tied tightly, not to be untied until the growing child in her womb should cause it to break of itself. While the *garde* was being made the *mambu* sang this song:

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*M' pas 'ti bête,
M' pas 'ti cochon,
Pou' on coué,
Pou' on marré moin.
Ça qui fait bien,
Cé bien li wé;
Ça qui fait mal,
Cé mal li wé.
Côté marré corde moin,
Yo passa la qui li.*

I am not a little animal,
I am not a little pig,
That one can confine me,
That one can tie me up.
He who does good,
Good he will see;
He who does evil,
Evil he will see.
Where I tie my cord,
They are stronger than it
[the evil?].

789 The chick was released in the open countryside. Were a person to capture and eat it, the evil that had been transferred to the fowl would come to him. Many such fowl live wild in the woods, and no one touches them.

789 There was no hesitation in permitting spectators to witness the making of this charm; rather it was held to be good business to allow anything pertaining to a cure to become widely known. Had the transaction involved evil magic, great secrecy would have been exacted of the principals, and no others would have been present. The operation of sympathetic magic in this case—the fact that the ingredients were either cleansing or evil-smelling, for example, indicates the concept behind the charm. Similarly, the assertion that the chick which figured so prominently in the rite would carry away the *wanga* sent against the pregnant woman shows how the forces of "white" magic are manipulated to combat "black."

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Another *garde* had for its purpose the protection of its owner against evil, and, being a *garde Mait' Carrefour*, was especially designed to enable him to go about unharmed at night. Though carefully made, it was not actuated by its power at the end of the *séance*, nor were extraordinary demands made of it and reciprocal promises of rewards for gratifying them, since it was then explained that it was desired as an example rather than an actively potent charm which, because of the difficulties of properly serving it away from Haiti, might cause its possessor harm. To make this charm the following ingredients were furnished:

One half-ell of red cotton
A bottle of *kola*
Clairin
Cakes
Cassava bread

Roasted maize
Seven "red" copper sous
A candle
A spool of black thread
Some ashes

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In addition, the maker of the charm brought a candle with him, and, more importantly, earth from the four corners of a crossroad. 789 ●

All shutters and doors of the house where the ritual was performed were closed and barred so that no passer-by might report the performance to the authorities, inasmuch as the practice of magic in any form is severely punished and the house was in the town itself. This constituted a departure from the usual practice, for in ordinary cases the rite would have been carried out at a crossroad in the countryside, where chances of detection would be slight.

The maker of the charm began by kneading the earth he had taken from a crossroad into the form of a small pear, about the size of a child's fist. Then taking seven plus seven measures of thread, he first burned the ends and then passed the resulting bundle of fourteen strands repeatedly over one of the native beeswax candles, twisting and doubling it so that it made a length of substantial cord. When completed, he put it to one side and made another like it, saying as he did so: [539]

Au nom de St. Garde, In the name of St. Garde,
Aujourd'hui, Lundi, nous Today, Monday, we twine
cordé votre garde. your garde.

Au nom de Malt' Carrefu', In the name of the Master
of the Crossroads,

Au nom de prière garde, In the name of the prayer
of charms,

Au nom Marie Shango, In the name of Marie
Shango,

Au nom de Gran' Malolu, In the name of Gran'
Malolu,

Qui marche accompagné Who goes together with the
Malt' Calfu'. Master of the Crossroads.

The purpose of this invocation was to summon both the Master of the Crossroads and his wife, Malolu, and the name of [776]

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the *loa* was pronounced as the cord was actually finished. *Clairin* was then poured in three places on the threshold and drunk by all present.

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Seated on a mat, the dealer in magic next placed the molded earth near by and put a dish of cassava bread, cake, and corn and a bottle of *kola* beside it, with the seven coppers and the red cotton, while he placed a candle on an empty white plate and lighted it. From his pocket he took a thick white candle of his own, and a razor, with which he cut it into three pieces. He then removed his shoes. After two pieces of the candle had been placed upright against the plate, the red cloth was torn in half and one portion of it, folded once, was laid on the white plate, the molded earth being set down in the center of this piece of cloth with the thread near by, as the officiant intoned:

<i>Au nom Dieu de Tè</i>	In the name of the God of the Earth,
<i>Au nom Dieu dit Fils,</i>	In the name of God called the Son,
<i>Au nom Dieu du Ciel,</i>	In the name of God of the Sky,
<i>Au nom de Ste. Vierge,</i>	In the name of the Holy Virgin,
<i>Au nom de St. Louis,</i>	In the name of St. Louis,*
<i>Au nom de Vierge de Ca'mel,</i>	In the name of the Virgin of Carmel,
<i>Voici poin' garde</i>	Here is a <i>point garde</i>
<i>Qui pr' allé marré ce soir,</i>	Which I am tying this evening,
<i>Lundi.</i>	Monday.

He thereupon poured *clairin* on the four corners of the cloth and on the earth, "since the soul of Malt' Carrefour is in the earth."

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Taking up the red cloth with the earth in it, he tied it with

* The patron saint of Mirebalais.

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the cord once over the center, and then at right angles so as to form a cross, crying: "A-i bobo!" To hold the cloth in place, he continued to pass the thread about the ball of earth again and again, though according to no special design after the first right angle had been made. As he did this, he sang:

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Garde la monté.

Dié nou e-e na coffré yo-o

Moin dit garde la monté.

Dié nou e-e na coffré yo-o

Garde-e, na coffré yo.

This garde is fashioned.

O God, close them-o.

I say this garde is fashioned.

O God, close them.

Garde-e, close them.

Calefou', cé nou minmé,

Nou Pemba pa joué.

Ça nou minmé.

Loa Pemba, joué na joué;

Magie loa,

Magie Calfou',

Ça nou minmé.

Crossroads, it is we who are here,

Pemba, do not play.

It is we who are here.

Loa Pemba, playing he plays,

Loa of magic,

Magic of the Crossroads,

It is we who are here.

His singing was interrupted by this invocation:

Au nom de Dieu,

Au nom de Sainte Vierge,

Au nom de St. Louis,

Au nom de Marassa,

*Voici poin' garde pou'
éparné malin esprits
marché dans la nuit.*

Au nom de Saints du Ciel,

Au nom de Saints de-Tè,

In the name of God,

In the name of the Holy Virgin,

In the name of St. Louis,

In the name of the Twins,

Here is a charm to foil the evil spirits who walk by night.

In the name of the Saints of the Sky,

In the name of the Saints of the Earth,

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<i>Au nom de Saints de la Lune,</i>	In the name of the Saints of the Moon,
<i>Au nom de Saints des Étoiles,</i>	In the name of the Saints of the Stars,
<i>Au nom de Saint de Vent,</i>	In the name of the Saint of the Wind,
<i>Au nom de Saint de Tem- pête,</i>	In the name of the Saint of the Tempest,
<i>Voici yun garde protection pou' marché dans la nuit,</i>	See, here is a garde which gives protection as one walks at night,
<i>Pou' Mait' Calefu'.</i>	For the Master of the Crossroads.

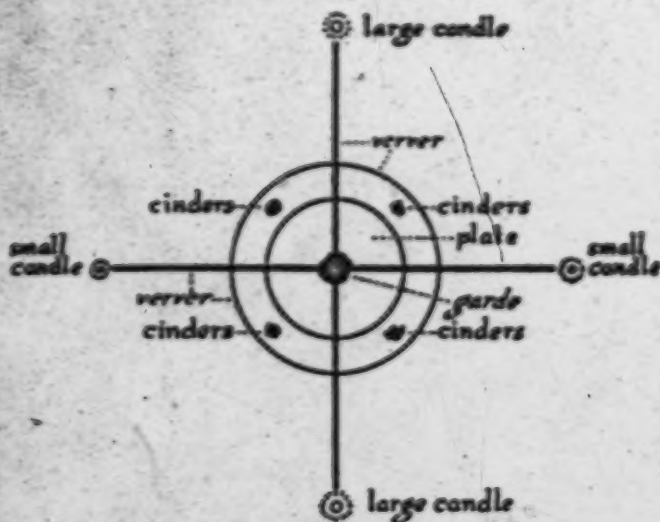
[533] The entwining of the garde ended with this song:

<i>Zoumba-é, ai papa, ai man- man,</i>	<i>Zumba-é, ai father, ai mother,</i>
<i>Calefu' barré yo,</i>	<i>The Crossroads bars them,</i>
<i>Cimilière barré yo,</i>	<i>The Cemetery bars them,</i>
<i>Moin monté garde moin,</i>	<i>I fashion my garde,</i>
<i>Ai manman, ai papa,</i>	<i>Ai mother, ai father,</i>
<i>Zoumba-é-é.</i>	<i>Zumba-é-é.</i>

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With the specially treated earth from the crossroads now safely enclosed in its red cotton, the officiant placed it in a white plate and made *verver* about it, using cinders which are termed *farine Guinée*, "the flour of Guinea," and lighted two bits of red candle. The *verver* circled the plate, and also described two long straight lines which crossed at right angles at the center of the circle, each being terminated by a candle—two large and two small. On the floor, near one of the large candles, the seven coppers were placed, and four small piles of cinders were heaped inside the circle, in the following manner:

seven copper
cents



Clairin was sprayed from the mouth of the maker to sprinkle the *garde*, and then another lighted candle was passed four times around the circumference of the plate, this being repeated with the two larger candles on the floor. The food was piled in the plate, and on it the coppers and the *garde* were set, after which, as flame leaped from one wick to another, the sorcerer passed the fire from candle to candle, making circular movements with each as he did so. Taking the other half of the red cloth, he removed the small candles, and changed the large one from 8 to o o, placing the bottles where the candles had stood, while he intoned: "I serve *Malf' Carrefour*, and I take the responsibility on myself for

789 making this garde. I have not obligated anyone else in any way."

789 539 He now poured *clairin* on the plate, lighted it, and stepped five times over the fire, twice turning the *garde* about in the flame, rubbing his face, hands, and head with the burning liquid, as he pronounced the following invocation:

<i>Au nom de Malt' Grand Bois,</i>	In the name of the Master of the Great Forest,
<i>Qui soldat Malt' Carrefour,</i>	Who is a soldier of the Master of the Crossroads,

<i>Au nom Malt' Cimitière,</i>	In the name of Malolu, of the Cemetery,
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<i>Au nom de Malolu,</i>	In the name of Malolu,
<i>Au nom de Kadia-Bosu,</i>	In the name of Kadia-Bosu,
<i>Qui soldat Malt' Carrefour nan toute pays,</i>	Who is the soldier of the Master of the Crossroads in all countries,

<i>Voici un couvert qui préparé ce soir pou' ou.</i>	Here is an offering prepared this evening for you.
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Extinguishing the *clairin*, he relighted it and repeated what he had just done as another Haitian, a spectator, commented: "If it were not a good *garde*, he would be burned." Finally

[533] he sang the following song, which ended this part of the ceremony:

<i>Garde lu wé magie carre-fou',</i>	This garde sees the magic of the Crossroads,
<i>Moin pralé sond'è point.</i>	I am going to test a charm.
<i>Magie cimitière,</i>	Magic of the cemetery,
<i>Moin pralé sond'è point.</i>	I am going to test a charm.

789 The officiant, gathering up the food, the plate, the candles, and the remaining half of the red cloth, prepared to go to

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the crossroads, where he alone would have to conduct the brief rite that was necessary to complete the making of this *garde*. As he arrived at his destination — this portion of the description is his — the plate was put down with the *kola* beside it, and *clairin* was poured on the ground. The lighted candles were placed near by, and with arms outstretched, he spoke the following formula: 789 •

<i>Au nom de Malt' Carrefour,</i>	In the name of the Master of the Crossroads,
<i>Voici un couvert sec de- posé jodi-a, Lundi.</i>	Here is an offering placed today, Monday.
<i>Au nom de Malt' Gran' Bru,</i>	In the name of the Master of the Great Forest,
<i>Ce couvert est pou' vous.</i>	This offering is for you.
<i>Malt' Carrefour, pour garde moin, sorti pou' 'ou.</i>	Master of the Crossroads, for [the sake of] my charm, which comes from you.
<i>Moin mandé pou' gardé</i>	I ask that you protect me
<i>Nan tout ces moin capab' trouvé moin</i>	In all I may encounter
<i>Pou' bien, nan pou' mal.</i>	Of good, and of evil.

Before leaving the crossroads, the maker of the *garde* touched the plate and bottles three times to earth, calling the names of Master of the Crossroads, Master of the Great Forest, and Master of the Cemetery. (788)

While the nature and forms of good magic that have been thus far discussed show a characteristic African pattern, the presence of the factor of medieval European magic is evident, though this is not as sharply identifiable here as in the functioning of the less pleasant aspects of these supernatural powers. That this merging of two traditions is fundamental in all Haitian magical practice must nevertheless be patent to all who have had experience with it, unless in their intentness on 789
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esoteric African survivals they have been blinded to the European elements.* It was, as a matter of fact, well-nigh impossible to discuss magic, whether good or evil, with a native for any length of time without hearing the names of three pamphlets published in Paris, *Le Grand Albert*, *Le Petit Albert*, and *La Poule Noire*. So portentous do the folk of Mirebalais hold the information contained in these works — though actually, when read, their contents are found to include nothing more dangerous than names of the proper roots and herbs with which to concoct a love-potion, or, far more frequently, magic for preventing wine from turning to vinegar, or for enabling one to gentle a wild colt — that their importation into Haiti is said to be prohibited by law, a statement which was not checked except in so far as inquiries for the pamphlets in Port-au-Prince bookstores proved in vain. The contents of these works on magic differ but little from those of a document written in Cr le, said by Seabrook, who reprinted it, to have come from the files of the Marine Corps, where it was deposited after having been taken during the rebellion of 1918-20 from the body of a fallen Caco chief known to have been a *bacor*.* The source of inspiration of a large number of these formulas and of many of their objectives is obviously in such European pamphlets.

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Turning now from the more passive, protective, and socially desirable forms of magic, a similar analysis may be made of its aggressive, destructive, and antisocial manifestations. That magic of this latter sort is much feared is a truism; yet that the fear of it goes as far or is as constant as most accounts of its workings state may be marked as gross exaggeration. For just as the practitioner of good magic knows how to bring about evil, so for every force that harms there is a cure, and for every *wanga* there is a *garde*.

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The malignant powers in the world of the Haitian are, like other phases of his life, of both European and African derivation. From Europe he has taken the *d mon* and the associated

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term *loup-garou*, or werewolf. From Africa has come the concept of the *baka*, though this he has merged with that of the *démon*, and all operate through the power of Lucifer and the Devil, conceived as two separate beings. In addition, as will be seen, the cult of the dead also contributes to this system, since the *los* who rule the cemeteries are indispensable for the practice of magic, as it bears especially on the concept of *zombi*, concerning which so much has been made in recent years.

The evil *loup-garous* are women whose real nature is revealed by their red eyes, though some hold that they have a black spot in the corner of the eye. Another word less frequently heard to designate the *loup-garou* is the Dahomean term *azeto*, employed in Africa for witches and vampires, a concept which in Haiti has become merged with that of the werewolf.⁸ The *loup-garou*, with her male counterpart, the *démon*, is empowered by the *bocor*. As might be expected, she is greatly feared, and should an old woman suspected of being one of them come to a house, someone will see to it that in an adjoining room two brooms are crossed as the woman's name is pronounced three times, so that if she is actually a *loup-garou*, she cannot escape.⁹ Children in particular carry counter-charms both against these women and against demons; one such, for a woman with child, has been mentioned in an earlier chapter,¹⁰ and the making of another *garde* of this type has just been described. With a charm of this kind "you can leave at midnight for Port-au-Prince [instead of waiting for dawn] and fear nothing. You may meet a band of horned demons carrying candles in their hands, but they will stand aside and let you pass."

In Mirebalais, *baka* are usually mentioned when these evil beings are discussed, particularly since it is in connection with them that the term *engagement* is most often heard. An *engagement*, which is more feared than a *wanga*, the word usually encountered in the literature when evil magic is under discussion, designates a pledge made by a person, usually to

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Novo, Dahomey. The members are, of course, not known, but there is always gossip, and occasionally a man, when quarreling, says: "Take care! You don't know who I am. . . ."

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Baka, *loup-garous*, and *démons* are not the only supernatural beings that a person may encounter from time to time. Though not all are creatures of magic, and not all are evil, all of them are treated with due caution. Such are the "river people" — children with six fingers, who are believed to belong to the Mait' Source, the Master of the Stream, and are destined to become *hungans* — this being an example of the good that may come from such supernatural association — or persons with light hair. Those with light hair are more dangerous, however, since occasionally such folk are taken for a time under the water, the men by female spirits and the women by males. One person in Mirebalais told of a distant cousin who disappeared as she went to the river to draw water. She was mourned as dead, but returned after a year and was welcomed home. As she began to recount her adventures, however, she was struck dumb, and never recovered her speech. Another spoke of his experience as a boy with such a water-spirit, a *Maitresse d'Eaux*. With a companion, he was walking along the bank of the Tombe River, when a woman was seen sitting on a rock combing her long light-colored hair. The other lad was invited to help her and went nearer, step by step, until, as he almost touched the comb, he turned and ran. Some time later he died.

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Another category of spirits, already referred to in discussing the cult of the dead, are *zombi*. To understand their nature, however, the use of magic to bring about death or its simulacra, and the measures taken to guard against this, must be first considered. In the preceding chapter it was observed how *hoholi* seeds are placed in the coffin of one suspected of an "unnatural" death to prevent the sorcerer from reaping the fruits of his deed. A cross of pine-wood, made by the *hungan* and empowered by him to repel evil, is frequently also put

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with it, or the body is made to lie face downwards in the coffin, since the discomfort of this position causes the spirit of the dead to avenge itself on the sorcerer who caused the death. When a man has been killed by magic, his surviving relatives go to a *hungan* or a *bocor* to discover the culprit. The names of those suspected of the deed are called. Before the diviner stands a pottery jar filled with magically treated water. When the unwilling image of the guilty one finally appears, the *hungan* plunges his knife into it, and as the water turns red, those watching know that when the specified number of days have passed, the guilty one will be dead.¹² Should a suspect be innocent, the image of the Virgin Mary or of St. John is sometimes seen when he is called; but if one known to be guilty does not appear, it is proof that his magic is stronger than that used to call him. Recourse is then had to a powerful *wanga*, or poison, or to the spirit of someone dead, an *âme abandonnée* who has led a life of evil and himself been a murderer. "They would certainly not send the spirit of the one just killed. He is too green" — to bring death to the killer. If none of these measures prevail, no further acts of revenge are attempted against the suspect, the feeling being that he has supplied himself with too powerful magic to allow effective revenge to be taken.

On occasion, an apparent death is felt not to be a real death, but rather the simulacrum of death brought about by the machination of a sorcerer. The corpse is thereupon given poison or stabbed with a dagger, to make certain that an apparent death becomes an actual one, but the person who stabs the body must stand behind it in order that the corpse as slave of the sorcerer may not reveal who had stabbed him when summoned, and thus make of the one who had robbed him of his prey a substitute victim. If poison has not been administered to the corpse, or if the body was not stabbed, after the funeral the sorcerer recovers the body, which, deprived of its soul, works for him as a *zombi*, only returning to the grave when the time decreed by God for his natural death is reached, or if he is accidentally fed salt.

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the *loa*. In one instance a man wore a red shirt with black crosses appliquéd on it; dresses of this type worn by women or children are made of cotton cloth, pieced together patchwork-quilt fashion, of either three, seven, seventeen, or twenty-one different colors or patterns, with reds, blues, and white predominating. These garments are worn for a specified time, also named by the *loa*. The term *pénitence* has been taken from Church terminology, and the motivating sanction derives equally from African and Christian concepts; * for example, the wearing of the garment is a compliment to the African deities represented by the colors, while the various rules about abstinence during its term of wearing is the European pattern of "penitence."

The elaborate cicatrizations, or raised designs made by scarifying the body, which marked the slaves newly arrived from Africa have quite disappeared, but a few scars can be discerned on the body or arms of a man by a practiced eye. These represent an African carry-over in the form of a *garde* applied by the injection of some magically endowed substance into a cut which thereafter gives what may be thought of as a kind of spiritual inoculation. African fashions of hair-tying have been retained by the women almost unchanged, and, as in Africa, hair-braiding is a highly developed art, so that the styles in which hair can be braided seem innumerable. This is particularly true of dressing the hair of small girls, whose heads are decorated with braids going the length of the skull, or dividing the scalp into small squares, each with its tuft of hair, or by a part in the middle with lines going at right angles from it across the head. These styles of braiding are not named as in other parts of the New World and in Africa, but the tradition of intricate braiding has lost none of its vigor.

The implements of the Haitian are both of European and African derivation. The ubiquitous machete, a saber-like tool employed in all manner of ways, from chopping down trees

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cultures, is used not only to point morals for the young but as an expression of the characteristically oblique forms of Negro expression in a quarrel, or in sounding a warning, or in commenting acidly on some social situation. A famous proverb, quoted from the earliest days, is today heard often in Mirebalais: "*Zafai mouton pas zafai cabrit*" — The affairs of the sheep are not the affairs of the goat — an injunction against gossip. When a person boasts that no one can harm him, the reply may come: "It is on a narrow path that one has to deal with a difficult horse." Should a man dismiss an experience as of but little consequence to him, he may hear the comment: "Often one pays an ox for a goat." When one person does harm to another, his victim may warn him with the phrase: "Behind the mountains are other mountains." If a man whose fortunes are flourishing attempts to console another who has suffered misfortune, or a rich man jibes at a poor one, the retort may be: "The rock under the water doesn't know how the rock in the sun suffers." To such an extent do proverbs comment on all aspects of life that almost no extended conversation occurs without them. Some of these are of European origin, but both numerically and in their use their character is preponderantly African, as is shown by their specific correspondence to proverbs used today in the regions from which the Negroes of Haiti were derived.

In the practice of magic, and more especially of black magic, it has been noted that African and European traditions have combined into an integrated cultural unit. The outward expression of magic in the charm or "fetish" as an aspect of African life is so obvious that it has been commented on by all observers. In Haiti, though the charms are not prominently displayed and personal charms especially are worn beneath the clothing, this concept of their importance in coping with life has been retained. Yet, as has been seen, Haitian magic is not African alone. For while the forces behind protective magic are primarily the *loa*, and those behind black magic are

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the powers that control the souls of the dead and those creatures of evil whose powers come from Satan — all this being African enough, in the sense that evil magic exists in Africa as elsewhere — the point, which bears repetition, is that the primary sanctions for evil magic have been reinforced by the books of magic handed down from medieval Europe.

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In this system, however, not only do European books of magic figure, but the Church also has its place. "The things of the Church are always affairs of magic," remarked one Haitian, meaning that they are best adapted to this purpose and are used when the opportunity is had. It is for this reason that great care is taken to keep all sacred objects in churches from the hands of unauthorized persons. To have something that has come from a church, such as a bit of a priest's robe or a few splinters from the statue of a saint, enlists the power of these on behalf of any objective that the maker of magic has in view, and invests any *garde* made with these with the power of God Himself. Thus the twofold meaning of the proverb:

[539] "*Vrai maré corde, vrai wanga, c'est l'Eglise* — The real tying of the cord, the true *wanga*, is the Church," or, similarly: "*Vrai hungan c'est l'Eglise* — The true *hungan* is the

[754] Church." However, whether it be through such African-like practices as the use of colored cloth, or caolin, or the tying of knots, or whether objects filched from the sanctuary of the church be employed, evil magic, derived alike from African and European sources, continues as a potent force of Haitian peasant life. For perhaps in magic more than in any other aspect of his culture has the peasant achieved a synthesis of the two currents that have contributed to his civilization. He has taken from both, and inasmuch as both adhere to a more general pattern which marks all the Old World, neither tradition has had to give way to the other.

NOTES ON THE TEXT

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CHAPTER XI

- 1 Compare Parsons (I), 173-4, where the cult of twins is discussed and some of its rites described.
- 2 Price-Mars (I), 35, mentions this as a power believed to be held by twins.
- 3 The phrase "cult of the dead" as employed here must be sharply differentiated from its misuse by Seabrook (82 ff.).
- 4 Cf. Price-Mars (I), 34.
- 5 Price-Mars (I), 34, speaks of the custom of always burying charms with the dead.
- 6 Wakes have been described by Seabrook, 89-91, and

others, but in such a manner that it is difficult to dissect out the reality of what was witnessed from the imaginative elements.

- 7 Cf. Wirkus, 221-3. The custom of giving the dead food at the grave, which he describes, is not followed when burial occurs in the Mirebalais town cemetery, nor, seemingly, elsewhere in the valley.

- 8 See the description of a commemorative rite for the dead in Price-Mars (I) 148-50.
- 9 This is a rule followed in West African practice.

CHAPTER XII

- 1 An interesting attempt to account for this is found in St. John, 230-1, where he speaks of the "two Vaudoux sects," one good and one evil.
- 2 St. Mery, i, 36. The term *garde* is almost entirely absent in later writings, the more sensational *wanga* (*ouanga*) being preferred.
- 3 Léger, 55, note 34.
- 4 Cf. Dorsainvil (I), 171.
- 5 No better summary of this could be had than that in Parsons (I), 179, written after a single *séance* with a *gangan*.
- 6 Pp. 324-31.

- 7 Mr. J. C. Trevor informs me that during a recent field-trip to the Virgin Islands he discovered books of magic in common use, obtained from a Chicago dealer.

- 8 It is not without interest to note that in the case reported in a Port-au-Prince newspaper and reproduced in facsimile by Seabrook, 334, concerning a woman from the commune of Mirebalais accused of sorcery, the name of the woman was *Azéman*.

- 9 Cf. Parsons (II), 396.

- 10 See above, pp. 94-5.

- 11 The closest correspondence

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[Information on the removal of the loa or maft'tête from the head of the deceased
will be found in category 764.]

Man and the Universe 9

Vodoun is clearly more than ritual of the cult temple. It is an integrated system of concepts concerning human behavior, the relation of mankind to those who have lived before, and to the natural and supernatural forces of the universe. It relates the living to the dead and to those not yet born. It "explains" unpredictable events by showing them to be consistent with established principles. In short, it is a true religion which attempts to tie the unknown to the known and thus create order where chaos existed before. 771

As in Dahomey, it is not a system imposed from above but one which pushes out from below. It is bred and nurtured in the family, in the towns, and in the fields. It is common law, with deep roots in an unbroken and continuous past. The priests of Vodoun do not control it and direct its course. They, like the least fortunate peasant, simply move about within it and make use of its resources. They are its servants and its interpreters. In their cult centers, the principles of Vodoun are brought into sharp focus and dramatized. Vodoun is democratic in concept. Any man or woman may have direct contact with the deities or dead ancestors without the intervention of the cult priest. There is no place or situation beyond the influence of the loa or beyond the limits of Vodoun. At every crossroads is the spirit of the crossroads guardian, Legba, and on every long trail is the spirit of the Master of the Highway. 771
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The cult priest nevertheless plays a significant and essential role. He translates beliefs that otherwise might tend to become amorphous into formalized action. He is a teacher, a repository of cult learning, and a vital catalyst. He gives form to abstraction, and practical meaning to symbols. He is the intellectualizing agency of a tremendous emotional force. Through his knowledge of the substance and forms of Vodoun, his experience in dealing with the loa, and in some instances his capacity to set magical forces into action, the cult priest is a dynamic power within his community. 793
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Though the making of *pouins* and *magie* (ritual magic) and *oungans* (aggressive magic directed against individuals) is within the realm of the cult priest's activities, these things are part of Vodoun only in a subsidiary sense. Magic lurks on the periphery of Vodoun. It has little or no place in the placating of the deities or the dead. It concerns the relationship of the living with each other and with *lou-garos* (*loups-garous*) and *baka* (demons). Although cult rituals include various pouin and magie ceremonies, the cult priest draws upon magic as he draws upon other mystic arts and fields of learning—leaf doctoring, divination, Catholic ritual, and Masonic symbolism. He attempts to bring together all thinking that widens the scope of Vodoun, in order to strengthen his hand to deal with 793
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10 *Man and the Universe*

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all aspects of the natural and supernatural. But the reputable cult priest does not dabble in "black" magic—the kind that maims or destroys human beings. One who does so is said to "work with two hands": one for the loa and one for evil. (The expression *servi de main*—"serving with two hands"—is also applied to a cult chief who deals with deities of more than one "nation.") Many a cult priest in making his ritual flour drawings on the earth holds his left hand behind his back and draws with his right, giving testimony that he "works with one hand" only.

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Each cult priest maintains his own cult temple, or *houngfor*. There are no cult officials above him, as there is no formal religious organization beyond the *houngfor* itself. Within his own special community he is therefore the chief religious functionary, the apex of an intratemple social organization. Under the cult priest, ordinarily, there are two grades of assistants, and below them two classes of servitors.

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The cult priest is usually referred to as a *houngan*, a Fon (Dahomean) title signifying "spirit chief." Sometimes he is called *gangan* (a Bantu word meaning "conjurer" or "doctor")² or *capla*. He also is known by the title *bocô* or *bocor*, which seems to be derived from *bocono*, the diviner or priest of the Dahomean Fa cult.³ The *bocor* is, in fact, sometimes referred to as a *divineur*, and he is regarded by some Haitians as a clairvoyant and a practitioner of magic. As in Dahomey, the *bocor* in Haiti foretells fate through the throwing of shells or chips, much in the manner of the secular game *mayamba*. He also reads destiny with small sticks or ashes. In earlier days the cult priest was sometimes known by the Yoruba name *babalao*, a title which has been corrupted to *papaloi*. A female cult leader is known as a *mambo*. She is presumed to have, in a general way, the same powers as the *houngan*, though in some quarters her *connaissance*, or "understanding," is not regarded so highly, and her status is believed to be somewhat lower.

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Directly under the *houngan* is his chief assistant, the *laplace*, and perhaps a little below him on the ladder, the *mambo caille*. The *laplace* is regarded as the vice-*houngan*, and he assumes responsibility for running the *houngfor* in the absence of his chief. The *mambo caille*, a woman, runs the cult center in the absence of both the *houngan* and the *laplace*. One step farther down the ladder is the *houngénicon*, who acts as a sort of chief of the main body of devotees. These high-ranking assistants to the *houngan* are sometimes called *badjicans*, or keepers of the altar.

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The servitors of the cult are known as *hounsi*, or "spirit wives," a name that was given to certain categories of cult servants in Dahomey.⁴ There are two main groups of *hounsi*: *kanzo* (those who have passed through a ritual fire test) and *bossale* (those whose loa are wild or untamed). The

² [Footnote appears on p. 349, Category 116. -- Analyst]

³ [Gorer, *Africa Dances*, p. 129; Herskovits, *Dahomey*, II, 208 ff. Cf. p. 349, Category 116. -- Analyst]

⁴ [Footnote appears on p. 349, Category 116. -- Analyst]

The Loa • 21

his "horse" may trample in glowing coals, plunge his hands in boiling oil, or play with red-hot iron bars. For Ogoun Chango is a fire-eater—a deity of the forge and of battle. The deity Legba is characterized as a limping old man. A "horse" possessed by Legba may cavort about on a kind of cane-crutch called a Legba stick. Each loa has his distinctive mark. As the Haitians say, "you learn about the loa by watching his horses."

In addition to having homes in Africa or below the water, most loa have special residing places in Haiti, such as stones, caves, trees, waterfalls, or springs. One may come across a boulder or a bamboo grove sacred to a certain loa, and food offerings are likely to be seen there. Many loa are identified with some specific variety of tree and will "inhabit" all such trees throughout the country. Loa Calbassie, for example, lives in the calabash tree, and Loa Général Brisé in the chardette tree. Offerings to these deities are set out underneath the tree or hung in its branches, and services may be held around the trunk. [776] [782]

Loa also live in the old Carib and Arawak celts which are found from time to time. These "loa stones," as they are called, are identified by their forms and their ability to pass certain tests. Some Haitians declare the stones must be able to "whistle," to perspire when blown upon, and to "talk." The loa stones ordinarily are passed on from one generation to another, in the hounfor and in the peasant hut alike. In this way the loa who inhabit them are inherited. Sometimes, but rarely, stones are sold; disposing of a loa stone requires an elaborate ceremony to guarantee that the seller will not be injured by the loa, who is likely to feel "wounded." In such a ceremony the loa is fed and placated and asked to go his way in peace. The loa stones are sometimes called "thunder stones," in the belief that they were hurled to earth by the deities Kebiosu, Sobo, and Chango (all of whom had similar functions among the Arada and Yoruba peoples of West Africa). The stones are cared for by their owners with the greatest reverence. [432] [782]

Loa are acquired by individuals in various ways. Many Haitians hold that every infant is born with a *maît' tête*—a spirit who is "master of the head." In this light, no individual is without a loa, although the deity may never manifest interest in the individual by an act of possession. A man may acquire a loa in the course of his life, although in that event the original *maît' tête* must be retired from his head. The "inherited" loa are usually not the personal deities but the special protectors of the household or the hounfor and are known as "loa of the house" or "family loa." [171]

Should a man acquire a new loa to replace the old as his *maît' tête*, he must undergo a ceremony known as *lavé tête*—the "washing of the head." The old loa is retired and sent away, leaving the field clear for the new [776] [782]

22 The Loa

776 one. Sometimes a loa who is making life too hard for a devotee will be
 789 retired without a replacement. The "washing of the head" must be accompanied by ritual safeguards, and all possible circumstances must be
 [828] taken into account by the officiating cult priest. There are many stories of people who became mentally deranged as a result of the removal of their loa from their heads.

776 The mait' tête must also be removed from the head of a person who dies.
 764 Should this not be done, the spirit of the deceased will go to reside "below
 [775] the water" and may cause trouble for the family. This loa is usually transferred to a special jar as a temporary resting place, and later perhaps into the head of another member of the family.

776 Though the loa is a powerful ruling force in the life of the individual,
 787 the human "horse" has controls over his deity too. He may reproach or
 789 admonish his loa for bad behavior or for failing to protect him. He may expose the loa's irresponsibility in public through the use of songs in religious rites. And though the loa is frequently encouraged to "enter," steps may be taken to restrain him from possession. This is called *marré loa* — "tying the loa." A woman may "tie" her loa by fixing a hairpin in her hair in a special way. A man may do it by placing his hands in cold water.²

776 Nevertheless, the loa are always lurking in the background. They are a constant and dramatic element in the religious life of the people. They may sometimes be controlled by the houngan, but they are an authority stronger than the priesthood. They give advice, courage, consolation, and status to their followers. They add much to an otherwise hard and ungenerous environment and evoke remembrances of Africa from which
 [152] the Haitians' ancestors were uprooted. They can also cause concern and anxiety; for the loa are not always benevolent, and they are frequently unpredictable.

776 Many of the loa are ancient deities, sib-founders and ancestors who loom
 171 out of a misty, half-forgotten past. Nananbouclou, Legba, and Ayida Wèdo have been known for many lifetimes in Dahomey. Chango, Ogoun, and Loko were old spirits in Nigeria before the first slave ships sailed from Africa to the New World. Their names and many others in present-day Haiti come from an ancient lore. They recall places, tribes, and old kingdoms from Senegal in northwestern Africa to the heart of the Congo.
 [182] They are a bond which holds the people of Haiti to Africa. In the mountains people sometimes say, "Haiti is the child of Dahomey," or "Haiti is the child of Guinée." The gods divide their time between their Haitian and their African children.

776 Yet in some respects the Haitians' concept of their loa is no longer purely
 177 African. The African religious patterns have been infiltrated by the lore
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5. Services for the Loa and the Family Ancestors



THE ORDEAL BY FIRE: KANZO

To advance beyond the lowest status in the hounfor, the hounsi must undergo the test of fire. This ritual is known as *kanzo*, meaning "to tie fire." In the drama of the hounfor there are many tests and ordeals. When certain loa enter, the mounted persons will eat broken glass. Other loa will cause their "horses" to rub hot pepper in their eyes. Still others will compel possessed persons to cut themselves with machetes. But these are bravado actions of the deities who have entered into the bodies of the servitors. The kanzo test is a formalized and premeditated ritual, in which it is demonstrated that the power of the cult—and the spirit of the individual—is superior to fire. Once having passed through this rite, the ordinary hounsi becomes a *hounsi kanzo*.

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The kanzo ceremony—or, as it is known in some parts of Haiti, the *brulé zin* (the boiling pot)—is performed in diverse ways according to the tradition of the particular hounfor. But common to all is the dipping of the hands into boiling oil.

The common hounsi, the bossale, is prepared gradually for kanzo. In the course of certain rites she undergoes a smoke ordeal. On all fours, her head close to a fire, she must breathe in smoke without choking or coughing. When these and other tests indicate that she is ready, she will be permitted to undergo the rite of the *brulé zin*.

Near the town of Thomazeau in the Cul-de-Sac Plain I witnessed one of these rituals. It began with a dance, in which only the hounsi of the cult participated. They were all dressed in white. The chief drummer wore a woman's blouse, a kerchief on his head, and on top of that a woman's straw hat. He played alone while the houngan invoked the loa Legba. [793] Then there were songs for Ogoun, and the dancing resumed.

The dance court was larger than average—about forty feet by sixty.

42 *Services for the Loa*

793 Attached to the ever-present po'teau mitan, or center post, were three oil
 794 lamps which threw a flickering light. At the entrance to the dance court
 787 a glowing-hot iron bar stood erect in a charcoal fire—the symbol of kanzo
 796 and of the loa Ogoun.

● 789 When the preliminary dances were over, the hounsi retired to one side of the court, where they sat in two rows facing the center.

[535] Ritual rattle and bell in hand, the houngan took his place by the sacred center post. He was an elderly man with a gray beard. He wore a red kerchief like a turban around his head. He smoked a cigar, and in his free hand he held a bottle of rum. The red kerchief, the rum, and the cigar were all in honor of Ogoun. He moved back and forth across the center of the court, talking casually, even joking and laughing. The drums began again, on a signal from the houngan, and a number of visiting houngans and mambos came forward and began a stately Jenvalo dance. The backs of their hands touching their knees, their backs bent low, they moved slowly counterclockwise around the center post. The mambos outnumbered the houngans four to one. The hounsi sitting on the sidelines sang. The song was for Maitresse Ezilie. The houngan in charge stood by patiently, deep in thought. His assistant, the laplace, kept time with a small rattle and led the singing.

When the song came to an end, the visiting cult priests and priestesses retired from the dance ground. Again the hounsi danced. Afterward the houngan began to talk *langage*, twirling his bottle of rum about recklessly. He was speaking to a loa. The chief drummer beat out a salute to Ogoun. Then the houngan raised the bottle and placed it to his ear. It gurgled away, some of the liquid trickling down his face. He seemed to be swallowing the rum.

While all the hounsi, with bowed heads, sat on the ground, the houngan recited from the ritual of the Catholic service. Latin words, then Creole words in Latin cadences. After a while the houngan's assistant took over the recitation, and the hounsi answered him responsively. When the prayers were over, the hounsi arose and passed into the hounfor. The drums began a fast Nago rhythm, and the hounsi emerged with brilliant silk flags studded with tiny brass rivets. The houngan's chief assistants—the laplace and the houngénicon—carried military sabers upraised. The dancers circled in single file around the center post, a triumphal military heralding of the deity of war and the forge.

To the accompaniment of a crescendo of drums, the procession suddenly reversed its direction. Watching the upraised saber of the laplace for a signal, the hounsi reversed their direction again.

000 When the dance drama ended, the hounsi carried the flags back into
 1 [Note that the houngan and the laplace are performing services normally performed by the Prêt savané. Cf. P. 351, Category 116. -- Analysis]

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When the dance drama ended, the hounsi carried the flags back into the hounfor. Then they sat on the ground while the houngan came forward to the center post to make his ritual flour drawing. Holding the flour in his hand, he allowed a little of it to trickle out in a fine white line. He worked rapidly, with half-closed eyes, speaking *langage*. A complicated white geometric pattern grew on the earth around the center post. Among its intricate designs highly stylized phallic forms were discernible. When the houngan had finished the drawing, he wrote the name of the loa whom they were serving: Ogoun Badagry. Then the other houngans and mambos came forward, one at a time, to add to the design. When the vèvè was completed it covered virtually the entire dance court.

The laplace came from the hounfor with a bundle of brilliantly colored beads. He stood by the houngan at the center post. One by one the hounsi came before the houngan, dropped on their knees, and kissed the ground. Around each hounsi's neck the houngan placed a string of beads. He raised her, pirouetted her first to the right, then to the left. The pirouette was to encourage possession by the loa.

From the hounfor the hounsi now brought herbs and vegetables for the sacrifice. Baskets and bottles were set out neatly on the ground, along with bundles of sticks and the iron pots, or *zins*.

The dance was resumed in a single rotating line around the houngan and the ritual offerings. Two hounsi in the center of the circle built fires, one on each side of the court. Over the fires they set the ritual iron pots. They poured oil into the pots and began the preparation of ritual food balls, like dumplings, from the ingredients at hand. One by one they dropped the dumplings into the oil, which was soon boiling.

The drumming, singing, and dancing were sustained at a high tension. A second team of drummers took over without a break in the music. The dancers now were almost exhausted. With a quick motion, the houngan spilled some rum into one of the boiling pots. A blue alcohol flame shot high into the air. Some of the hounsi screamed but continued to dance. Three of them fell to the ground, their limbs jerking uncontrollably. The loa had entered. Two of the "mounted" hounsi arose and continued to dance, staggering and jerking across the dance court. The third had to be lifted and carried into the hounfor.

The man who was to undergo initiation was waiting in the *djévo*, a special room in the hounfor. For the past seven days he had lain on a mat in the *djévo*, in virtual isolation except for visits from the houngan and the laplace.

Now the kanzo initiate was brought out, completely covered with a white cloth. Only his hands and feet could be seen. With one hand on the shoulder of the laplace, who preceded him, he moved with the dancers

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44 *Services for the Loa*

794 in a circle around the two boiling pots. On the seventh circuit of the
 787 course, the laplace stopped him at the first pot. The houngan grasped the
 789 man's free hand and, bending down, dipped it into the boiling oil. There
 796 was no visible indication of pain. They moved to the second pot, and the
 793 man's hand was dipped again. They proceeded again to the first pot, where the dipping was repeated, then back again to the second pot. The neophyte's hand entered the boiling oil seven times in all. He made no sound, showed no resistance, no reflexes. Then the hounsai took him back to the hounfor. It was all over. After three days of isolation, they said, he would be kanzo.

The houngan peeled an orange, while everyone crowded close to watch. In it he found a two-gourde note. He peeled another orange and found in it a slip of paper with the name of a woman on it. She came forward, and everyone laughed. She was an old woman, the oldest of the hounsai. The houngan held the two-gourde note between his teeth. The old woman took the other end of the note in her teeth, but she had to kiss the houngan before he would let go.

796 The ritual of *brulé zin*, or *kanzo*, is of unmistakable West African origin. Herskovits has described a ceremony in Dahomey which in many details could easily have taken place in Haiti. The Dahomean rite was in honor of the gods of the Thunder pantheon. Here, too, we find a pot of boiling palm oil, in which are the sacred dumplings: "When the fire had finally subsided and only a faint column of smoke issued from the pot, the initiate came dancing toward it, thrust her hand into the boiling oil, and lifted out a dumpling. . . ." ²A

FAMILY RITES AT LÉOGANE

769 These services for family ancestors took place in the mountains above
 796 Léogane at the ancestral home of my friend Libera Borderau. They were
 787 conducted on the grounds of his grandmother's house. The ritual began
 798 with dancing. Against the wall of the house sat the three drummers with their Arada drums. Near them, leaning against the wall, were the flags of the family loa. Also near by was a long high table serving as a make-shift altar called the *fé*. In the very center of the table in a clean white dish lay eight loa stones—old Carib artifacts. The stones were identical in shape, all of them perfectly symmetrical, resembling small, pointed cigars. In the *pierre-loas* lived the family deities, and much of the ceremony was built around them. The stones had been bathed and polished in oil for the occasion. Set around the plate of stones were numerous small *criches* (French, *cruches*—clay water jugs), glass bottles, and earthenware jars which also contained loa. On the low bench before the table, seven dishes ²n [Herskovits, *Dahomey*, II, 165, Cf. P 351, Cat. 116. April 1957]

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houngan took his place before the small altar and the cross surmounted by the skull. Again he spoke *langage* and rattled his asson. He took from the altar a small-necked bottle containing a white alcoholic liquid and a tight-fitting iron cross. The presence of the iron cross inside the bottle was represented as a magical phenomenon. The houngan took a mouthful of the white liquid and sprayed it out in a fine mist over the skull. Twice more he sprayed the mist, in different directions. Then he poured a little of the liquid directly on the skull. The room was filled with the smell of alcohol. The houngan lighted a candle and sat in a low chair facing the altar. He shook his asson rhythmically and spoke *langage* to Pinga Maza. Suddenly Pinga Maza entered the houngan's head. The houngan became violent. He jerked this way and that, making strange noises in his throat. He seized a machete from the altar, waved it around, and struck the flat of it against his head. He continued for a while to beat his head fiercely with the machete. Gradually he became quiet. His assistants placed Pinga's red jacket on him. Now he spoke in the tired voice of an old man. He complained that he was hungry, that he had not eaten for a long while. His assistant handed him a razor blade. He placed it in his mouth, chewed it up, and swallowed it, washing it down with more of the white liquid in the bottle. He asked for more, and they gave him a second blade to eat. He demanded a third, and ate that, too, spitting out small fragments of steel that caught in his teeth.

His assistant told him there was a man present seeking advice about a pouin. The possessed houngan looked around with half-closed eyes. He asked the man his name, and what he wanted. After hearing the client's story, the houngan took out a deck of cards and placed them one at a time, face up, on a winnowing tray. After studying the cards he said: "You are strong, but not strong enough. You already have some protections, but they do not protect you from the dangers coming your way. You have powerful enemies. You must have a new pouin." The man said yes, he wanted a new pouin, but how much would it cost? Pinga replied through the mouth of the houngan: "Twenty-five dollars." The man said: "I will get the money and return." He went out after placing five gourdes on the winnowing tray with the cards. Pinga became drowsy. The houngan's head fell forward on his chest and he slept. The divining session was ended.

THE WATER ROAD

The land where the loa live, the place "below the water," is not thought of as being in the water itself. It is dry and airy, like the countryside of Haiti. But the route to it is through water.

84 *Songs of the Peristyle*

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Ogoun é oh moin blessé!

Ogoun é oh moin blessé!

A pas m'blessé Ferei,

M'pas wè sang moin!

M'pas wè sang'm Mait Ogoun,

Moin pas wè sang moin!

M'pas wè sang'm Badagry,

Moin pas wè sang moin là! [Ex. 62]

Ogoun é, oh, I am hurt!

Ogoun é, oh, I am hurt!

Now I am hurt, Ferei,

I don't see my blood!

I don't see my blood, Master Ogoun,

I don't see my blood!

I don't see my blood, Badagry

I don't see my blood here!

The loa Moundongue, like Damballa, likes goat meat, and it can be cooked in two ways:

Yè yè yè!

Moundongue oh!

Oh Moundongue oh yè yè yè!

Moundongue mangé cabrit boulé,

Moundongue mangé cabrit boucané! [Ex. 63]

Yè yè yè!

Moundongue, oh!

Oh, Moundongue, oh, yè yè yè!

Moundongue eats boiled goat,

Moundongue eats roasted goat!

Or again, the servitors may sing:

Coto passé na ha'ou mangé, oh Ti Moundongue nà!

Coto passé na ha'ou mangé, Moundongue nà! [Ex. 64]

Wherever you are, we give you food, oh, Ti Moundongue there!

Wherever you are, we give you food, Moundongue there!

[787] The loa Adja also has animal sacrifices and special dishes for his
[789] mangé, but sometimes he—and the "horses" he mounts—will eat broken
glass:

Oh Adja mangé bounda dèmijon!

Adja véco' véco'l

Adja mangé bounda dèmijon!

Adja véco' véco'l [Ex. 65]

Oh, Adja eats the bottom of a bottle!

Adja, old one, old one!

Adja eats the bottom of a bottle!

Adja, old one, old one!

For the loa Ianman Ibo the proper sacrifice is a rooster, and the deity declares:

Nanchon Ibo m'a mangé gros coq oh nanchon Ibol

Nanchon Ibo m'a mangé gros coq!

Nanchon Ibo m'a mangé gros coq oh nanchon Ibol

Waille waille waille! [Ex. 66]

96 *In the Mapou Tree*

The cow was

never seen again, and after a prêt' savane had read prayers over the spring the people again drew water from it.

Baka more often change themselves into gray or red pigs, but one ingenious baka was said to have transformed himself into a bicycle, which was seen traveling alone at night on the road from Port-au-Prince to Léogane.

Some people wear charms against the baka's malevolence; but the most effective weapon is the cocomacaque stick. The cocomacaque, or monkey palm, is a palm tree that grows only a few feet high. It has magical powers to drive off not only baka but other evil beings as well. When the tree is growing in its natural state, it is said, you must never mention its name in its own presence. Should you say within its hearing, for example, "Look at the cocomacaque," it will wilt and fall over, losing all its vital powers. The trunk of this midget palm is a favorite material for fashioning a walking stick or a short baton. A man going on a long journey into strange country may carry a cocomacaque stick with him to brandish at the crossroads where baka lurk, or to drive off strange animals that may be baka in disguise.

In their relationships with human beings, the baka are not always random. Sometimes, for a terrible price, they will undertake to make a man rich or to "eat" his enemies for him.

In some parts of Haiti, baka seemingly have found their way into the ranks of the loa. In the Congo-Guinée pantheon there is a deity called Bakulu Baka, or Babaku Baka. He is a malevolent spirit who "eats" people in the best baka tradition, and he lives, significantly, in the mapou tree, which is shunned by all good loa.

The *engagements*, or compacts, in which baka sometimes figure are usually made with another sort of creature, the *djab*, or devil. A *djab* is a manlike being but is superhuman, ferocious, and terrible. Some *djab* are small, some large, some innocent in appearance, some grotesque. They are supernatural sorcerers who deal out riches in exchange for human beings. A frustrated or desperate man may go to a *djab* and ask for a favor, which will usually be granted for a heart-rending price. Persons who appear to gain wealth suddenly may be suspected of having entered into an *engagement* with a powerful *djab*.

One story is about a man of Port-au-Prince who, needing a large sum of money, went to a famous *djab* who lives in a cave known as Trou Fourban. This powerful *djab* agreed to provide all the money required, but only on condition that the man deliver to him each year one of his children. The man suddenly came into a large fortune. But when the anniversary of his compact arrived, he did not go to Trou Fourban

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with one of his children as he had agreed. That night his oldest child died. The next year to the day, his second child died. And the third year, the third child died. On the fourth anniversary, the man's wife died. On the fifth, he himself died. The djab of Trou Fourban had collected his debt.

Another great djab lives on the northern mountain called Morne Ronde. A man of Cap Haitien was said to have made a compact with him for wealth. One day there was a great hubbub in front of the man's house. A crowd gathered and stood peering inside his door. What they saw was a rain of money falling down from the rafters. The floor was covered with ten-gourde bills. When the *gendarmérie* came to investigate, they stood at the doorway in awe, watching the money float to the floor. The man finally closed the door. That night he moved away, and no one in Cap Haitien ever saw him again.

The djab are insatiable. For their favors—which range from providing wealth and political position to destroying one's enemies—they always demand more in return than the recipient has counted on. Catholic ritual is called upon in some instances to break the djab's chain of demands.

Some tales are told in which human beings outwit the djab, particularly the lesser ones; but more often than not, the djab have the last laugh. During the big hurricane which hit Haiti in 1954, a huge landslide occurred near the place called Bayè Roche in the La Selle Mountains. An entire village was wiped out, covered by the falling rocks. Throughout this region the disaster was attributed to the action of a djab reputed to live in one of the nearby caves. Many lost cattle were found wandering near Bayè Roche, and they were believed to be people whom the malevolent djab had transformed into animals.

The height of bravado is to demand to be confronted with a big djab face to face. There is a song which goes:

Conduit'm allé oh!
Conduit'm allé djab nan Trou Fourban!
Conduit'm allé! [Ex. 91]

Take me, oh!
Take me to the djab in Trou Fourban!
Take me!

There are still other supernatural creatures in Haitian lore who must be guarded against, such as the *djannèsse*, the *revenant*, and the *lutin*. The *djannèsse* is a female ghost who must live in the woods for a number of years before she can enter heaven, as a punishment for the crime of

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775 having died a virgin. The *lutin* is the spirit of a child who died before baptism.¹ The *revenant* is a spirit of a dead person who feels he has been mistreated, and who returns to the world of the living to plague their families or their enemies.

776 The *lou-garo* (*loup-garou*) is a being of another kind, a vampire. She
754 is human in form but sheds her skin and assumes animal forms at night when she roams the countryside seeking a victim. Salt is her nemesis. Should her human skin be found and salt sprinkled inside it, she would not be able to put it back on and would be destroyed.

776 A special form of the *lou-garo* is the *bizango*, a kind of enormous
778 dog that runs in packs at night seeking people to eat. Also related to the *lou-garo* is the *démon*, a male creature of amorphous personality and character who can convert himself into an animal at will. There are societies of *démons* which, like those of the *baka*, meet in the dark of night in their assembly hall inside the *mapou* tree. Haitians who are conversant with such matters agree that there are many such trees, but that the most notorious of them are *Mapou Miteppe* in *Miragoane*, *Mapou Simon* in *Aux Cayes*, and *Mapou Danpisse* at *Léogane*.

Other fearsome beings such as the *zombes*—human cannibals—also gather in the *mapou* to conduct their affairs.

789 Against all these creatures, and against black magic in general, there
776 are many magical protections, the most common of which is the *garde corps* (protect the body), or simply the *garde*. It is usually obtained from a *boco* and consists of a small bag of mysterious ingredients. The owner wears it around his waist or around his neck. Sometimes it is merely a cord with a number of ritually made knots. The *garde corps* is made to prescription and protects the wearer against specific things such as a *lou-garo*, poison, or death from a bullet or knife. In describing a *garde corps* he had prepared for a client, a *boco* revealed that it contained dried chicken blood, extract of *wari* bean, and *gris-gris* powder, among "a thousand and one" ingredients. The *gris-gris* powder is made from a dried *gris-gris* bird.¹

754 There is another form of protective magic, broader in scope, called the *arrête*. It is used to protect not merely an individual but an entire household, or even a group of households. In addition to warding off supernatural creatures and protecting people against assassins, the *arrête* is a neutralizing agent against various forms of black magic such as the *ouanga* and the *maskanda*. The *arrête* bundle or object is hung in the house or in a nearby tree, or it is buried somewhere on the grounds. Sometimes it is nothing more than a pointed stick placed in a certain way before a door or gate, or at one side of the trail leading to the

¹[Simpson, "Haitian Magic," *Social Forces*, October, 1940, p. 97. Cf. P-351, category 116, --Analyst]
x [For footnote, See category 116, P-351, --Analyst]

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house. A round, polished Indian stone is occasionally used as a *garde habitation*. And old people speak of a very powerful charm known as a *gros arrête* which in former times was placed on the trail to protect entire villages or valleys. 789 ●

Still another potent defensive charm is the *pouin*, which is the product of ritual magic within the cult temple. A pouin may be an actual bundle containing a formula of special ingredients; more often, it is invisible, consisting of magical forces unleashed into space by the houngan. There are many ceremonies in the hounfor devoted to the projecting of these magical forces. They are called *cérémonie pouin* or *cérémonie magie* and are dramatized by special cult songs and dances. Sometimes the magic ceremony is woven into a more generalized cult ritual. The powers of the pouin are regarded as wider and more potent than those of the arrête. Pouins are said to protect an individual or a group not only against other magic but also against natural phenomena and accident. A pouin may ward off lightning, for example, or protect one from falling trees or from shipwreck or drowning. But it is not solely defensive magic. It may bring success in fishing, or produce a good crop in one's garden, or aid human fertility. 789
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Since the crops and the garden are the substance of life, much attention is given to their protection. An enemy may attack a man or his household through garden magic. He may bury a ouanga in the earth, to bring sickness or ruin. He may poison a tree by performing a special rite at its foot, and its fruits will then carry disease or death to the one who eats them. Or he may make a compact with the earth so that it will dry up and refuse to produce for the one who tills it. Against all these malevolent possibilities, as well as against common thieves, the Haitian peasant has many magical and practical resources. Some people are said to employ zombies as watchmen. These fearsome creatures will capture a trespasser and hold him for the owner of the field.³ Or perhaps the owner will place special arrêtes in his garden. Occasionally a man will protect his fields by planting *piquettes* in the earth. The *piquette* is a piece of sharpened bamboo or hard wood. Its point is dipped into poison, and it is placed in the ground, sharpened end up. An unwary intruder who steps on a piquette may die of his wound. [787]
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To counteract the *maljo*, or evil eye, a man may procure from a bocor a special shirt made of wide strips of red, white, and blue cloth sewed together. This shirt, called a *moyo* or *mawo*, is worn for seven days if the *maljo* is a rather ordinary one. If the evil force is a particularly virulent one, however, the *moyo* will be worn as long as twenty-one 754
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³[Simpson, "Haitian Peasant Economy,"
Journal of Negro History, October, 1940,
p. 503. Cf. p. 351, category 116. -- Ana11st]

100 *In the Mapon Tree*

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789 days, according to the bocor's prescription. It is also employed to protect an individual against various forms of the ouanga.

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059 Against poisons, the usual protection is the *drogue*, prepared by a bocor or a leaf doctor who specializes in such things. After having drunk a *drogue*, a man is regarded as immune to poison. Should a man be a "horse" of the loa Ogoun Balindjo, however, no *drogue* is necessary, for Balindjo's people are regarded as immune even without such precautions.

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791 Foretelling the future and divination take two general forms. In one variety, a bocor or *divineur*, using ritual paraphernalia such as cards, flour, or ashes, takes personal responsibility for the divination. In the other form, the *divineur* functions only when possessed by a loa, and it is the deity himself who foretells and foresees. An account of this kind of divination is given in chapter 6. "Horses" of the loa Mâit' David when possessed are given packs of cards, for they are reputed to be able to divine the future.

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793 Certain houngans use the instrument known as the *gembo* as a divining device. This is a small shell about the size of a lemon, through which a long cord is passed. When there is no tension on the cord, the shell can easily be slid back and forth. When the cord is taut, the shell will not slide. The houngan holds one end of the cord under his foot, the other end with his hand above it. He starts his divination with the shell at the top and the cord taut. Shaking his assen with the other hand, he talks *langage* and asks questions. To indicate a "yes" answer he relaxes the tension on the cord and the shell slips downward an inch or so. The typical *gembo* is decorated with beads, old coins, religious medals, snake bones, and a fragment of mirror.

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787 There are several ceremonies for locating a thief or other guilty person. One is called *passage d'alliance*. A ring suspended on a string is held over a person's head. If it moves in a regular pendulous way, the person is innocent; but if it swings in a circle, his guilt is established. Another method is the use of a long stick. The stick is pointed at one man, then another, and when the end vibrates in a circular manner the guilty party has been located. This technique is known as *jugement de baguette*. A third method is the one known as *passé balai*. A man sits in a low chair and small branches and leaves of the *balai* (broom) tree are placed under the chair and fastened to its uprights. A guilty person sitting in this chair will cause the *balai* branches to vibrate and close in on him.

759 The role of the *docteur /é*—the leaf doctor—straddles the field of magic and pharmacology. Many of his potions are of a mystical and

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Many of his potions are of a mystical and semiritual nature; yet from roots and leaves he brews specific medicines for specific illnesses, such as rheumatism, fevers, malaria, worms, and yaws. Sometimes his cures are effective, sometimes they fail. The leaf doctor is consulted for poisons and their antidotes, though many poisons, such as that in the wari bean, may be gathered and dispensed by anyone.

One of the macabre figures in Haitian folk belief is the *zombie*. In the most general sense, the name designates the bland soul of a person who died without the distinction of having a loa in his head. The soul or spirit has no special will. It cannot affect the living in any way, unlike the lutin, the djablette, and those who were buried possessed of mystères. It does not harass enemies or importune its descendants. It is an undynamic, simple, otherworldly spirit, a sort of negative afterimage. It does not need to be placated or feared.

But the word *zombie* has another, more popular meaning, signifying a human being who has "died" and been resurrected from the graveyard by members of the Zeanbeup Society, by a wicked sorcerer, or by some other person who has realized the "power" to perform this act.

The Haitian countryside is full of tales about fresh graves that have been robbed of their bodies by practitioners of this special form of black magic. By a secret formula these soulless "dead" are revived and given a semblance of life. They lack only the power of will. Without that, they are at the complete command of the sorcerer who has disinterred them. They are presumed to be spirited away and put to work at drudgery in some remote place. Stories are told of plantations in the mountains whose entire labor force is made up of zombies, the animated dead. You can tell a zombie when you see him. His eyes are dull and glazed, he gives no sign of recognition to people he once knew, he moves slowly and ploddingly at his tasks, and he takes orders only from his master. He neither sings nor dances, and he eats and drinks without interest. His facial expression never changes. He is emotionally and mentally dead. Neither the rites of the Church nor those of Vodoun can help him. There is only one formula for breaking the spell. If he eats salt he will either regain full life or die a merciful death. The master therefore takes great care that his zombies never have salt.

Haitians have many explanations of this mystical phenomenon. Some hold that the sorcerer has the unique power to revive the dead. Others believe that the victim is not really dead but has succumbed to a virulent poison which numbs all the senses and stops bodily functions but does not truly kill. Upon disinterment, the victim is given an antidote which restores most physical processes but leaves the mind in an inert state, without will or the power to realize.

102 *In the Mapon Tree*

171 The connection between the Haitian zombie and certain soulless beings
 775 of West Africa is quite apparent. Herskovits has observed that in
 754 Dahomey there are tales of persons thought to be dead who were found
 wandering in far-off places. These individuals had no memories of their
 former lives. "They were soulless beings, whose death was not real, but
 resulted from the machinations of sorcerers who made them appear as
 dead, and then, when buried, removed them from their graves and sold
 them into servitude in some far-away land."⁴

764 According to stories told by some Haitians, in ceremonies for the
 775 dead where there is suspicion that the deceased was the victim of this
 particular kind of poisoning a close relative stabs the body with a knife
 before burial to assure that it will not become a zombie. In other in-
 stances, close guard is kept over the grave for a number of days and
 nights, so that the body cannot be stolen.

775 Some members of the elite publicly dismiss the whole business as
 780 savage fantasy but privately say something like: "I don't believe in this
 184 sort of thing, but how can you explain the case of Marie Zambam in
 'Cap Haitien?' And then they will tell of curious events of which they
 have firsthand knowledge.

538 There are numerous legends of persons who died and were buried,
 775 only to reappear perhaps years later in some mountain village, or in the
 780 big city of Port-au-Prince. An educated man in Port-au-Prince declared
 754 that a dead cousin of his reappeared one day in the city ten years after
 her burial. He tried to speak with her, but she answered only haltingly
 and gave no sign of recognition. After this one appearance, he said, she
 was never seen again. Another Haitian from the north told of a grave-
 yard watch in his village to prevent disinterment of the grave of a young
 girl who had just died. The two watchers dozed fitfully, and suddenly
 awoke to see a man removing the girl's body. When they jumped to
 their feet and went after him he escaped into the shadows. But the
 girl staggered about, fell to the ground, and gave birth to a baby. Both
 the girl and her newborn child were taken to the village and given
 salt to eat. Both of them recovered.

One villager from the southern mountains reported that in his travels
 he came upon a coffee plantation on the sparsely populated mountain
 called Morne la Selle, and found all the laborers to be zombies. They did
 not sing as they worked, their movements were slow and cumbersome,
 and they did not sweat in the hot sun. When he asked for a drink of
 water, no one replied. While he stood trying to converse, the master of
 the plantation came with a hard leather whip and angrily ordered him
 to leave.

* [Herskovits, *Dahomey*, II, p. 243. Cf. p. 351, Category
 116. -- Analyst]

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When they are not working, it is said, zombies are tied with special ropes made from the leaves of the banana tree. One popular song goes:

Nans Léogane
Yo marré zombie nans paille fig-bananel
Abobo wye-oh!

In Léogane
They tie the zombie with banana straw!
That is all, wye-oh!

Some Haitians tell you they know there are zombies because they have seen them. Not too many years ago a visiting writer stoutly declared that she, too, knew there were zombies because she had seen one—in the mental hospital at Pont Beudet. Although her reasoning was not quite airtight, the possibility that mental defectives are sometimes mistaken for zombies is worth considering.

Houngans who "work with two hands" are reputed to be able to gain permanent control over persons by means of a formula known as *tuyé-lèvé* (kill and raise). Either for himself or a client, the houngan gains power over the victim by "killing" him through special magic and then "removing the soul" (*retiré n'dme*). The victim, presumed to be normally dead, is buried by his family; the houngan then retrieves the body and "restores the soul" (*metté n'dme*). With his soul restored, the victim has, in effect, become a slave of the houngan, who can do with him as he wishes. He differs from a zombie in that he has a soul, whereas the zombie has none.

Some Haitians believe that even one who has died a nonmagic death may be raised from the dead. To accomplish this, the houngan or bocor stands over the body, goes through a specified ritual, and calls out the dead person's name: "Albert Moreaul Albert Moreaul Albert Moreaul Lèvé non! Lèvé non! Lèvé non!" ("Get up! Get up! Get up!") Then, it is said, the dead man may awaken.

It is believed that a houngan may also command the souls of dead persons to perform services for him against an enemy. The souls at his disposal for this work are those which he keeps in earthen jars in his hounfor. Should he wish to plague an enemy, he will send one of these souls to the man's house to make him sick, or lazy, or insane. Usually, the man does not know what is happening to him; but if he becomes aware that a dead soul is working on him, he attempts to find out which houngan has sent it. Perhaps the houngan can be bought off. If not, another houngan may provide relief.

While some believe in the reality of the various demons and specters,

342 Appendix 5: Song Translations

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Cousin, oh, cousin, oh,
Cousin, don't take cousin, oh, cousin!

[436] (A *gourdain* is one-quarter of a *gourde*, or the equivalent of five cents in United States money. *Dé gourdain* is ten cents.)

[198] EXAMPLE 141 consists entirely of ritual language.

EXAMPLE 142

Call Damballa, call Domici, call Damballa Wèdo,
Damballa, call Damballa Wèdo, Damballa.

[776] (Damballa and Domici are the names of loa.)

EXAMPLE 143

Ibo, I am a big man, oh!
Ibo, I am a big man, oh!
Ibo, I am the patriarch, oh, I am the patriarch, oh,
I am the chief of my house!

[776] (Ibo is the name of a loa, from whose point of view the song is being sung. Ibo is stating his seniority in his house, or family, for there are other loa related to him. The word *grand* in Creole, as used here, is difficult to translate. It means good or elder, or both. A *grand famille* is the oldest in the extended family, and usually carries the connotation of head or chief.)

[192]

EXAMPLE 144

Ibo Ibo é, Samardi Kamal
Etc.

[776] (Samardi Kama is the name of a loa of the Ibo family. The song consists of a repetition of his name, with variations.)

EXAMPLE 145

Ibo Ibo é, Marianni é!
Etc., with variations.

[776] (This is a song to the loa Marianni, of the Ibo family. Except for his name, in various combinations, there are no words.)

[198]
[789]

EXAMPLE 146 is a song for the making of magic. It is entirely in ritual language.

EXAMPLE 147

Call Oange, call Labosan in the water!
Oange, oh, call Oange in the water!
Oange, oh, call Oange in the water!

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CHAPTER 5: Services for the Loa and the Family Ancestors (pp. 41-74)

¹Note that the huingan and the laplace are performing services normally performed by the *prê* *surane*. 000

²Herskovits, *Dahomey*, II, 165.

³Parsons, *Spirit Cult in Hayti*.

⁴Account given by Jean Ravel Pintra.

⁵Informant: Albert Kofi Prempeh, Ghana.

⁶Account given by Voluska Saintvil. A. W. Cardinal notes in his book *Tales Told in Togoland* (p. 69): "Trees are in most cases treated with respect. Before a man dare fell one for a canoe he must and invariably does sacrifice to its spirit and apologizes for the harm he is about to do it." [534] [535] [536] [537] [538] [539] [540]

⁷The rite of *rafrachi* *tte* is conducted periodically for a *mal* *tte* after the original *lar* *tte* ceremony. The purpose is to "refresh" the loa and make him content with his residence in the head of the devotee. [541] [542] [543] [544] [545] [546] [547] [548] [549] [550]

⁸Herskovits, *The Myth of the Negro Past*, p. 313.

⁹It is of interest to note the perseverance of traditional attitudes toward water rites in certain Negro cults in the United States. River baptism often is attended by ecstatic seizures in familiar form.

¹⁰Odetta Mennesson Rigaud, "Notes on Two Marriages with Voudoun Loa," in Appendix A of Deren, *Divine Horsemen*, p. 264.

CHAPTER 6: Songs of the Peristyle (pp. 75-94)

¹This theme is further commented on in chap. 13. Compare with the following excerpt from a Surinam song reported by Herskovits in *Suriname Folk-Lore* (p. 689):

I have no mother there,
I have no father there,
I have no sister there,
I haven't got anybody there.

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CHAPTER 7: In the Mapou Tree: Magic, Demons, and Compacts (pp. 95-104)

¹Simpson, "Haitian Magic," *Social Forces*, October, 1940, p. 97.

²Note the coincidence of the term *gris-gris* or *grigri* as used in the United States, where it has the same meaning as *mojo*, or "voodoo" charm. [541] [542] [543] [544] [545] [546] [547] [548] [549] [550]

³Simpson, "Haitian Peasant Economy," *Journal of Negro History*, October, 1940, p. 903.

⁴Herskovits, *Dahomey*, II, p. 243.

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CHAPTER 8: Mardi Gras and Rara: Jugglers, Maypoles, and Kings (pp. 105-109)

¹Aubin, *En Haiti*, p. 42.

²Marionettes of this kind have been observed in both East and West Africa and are well known in the region of Senegal. I saw a phallic marionette, virtually identical with the Haitian version, in the neighborhood of Khartoum, Sudan. [541] [542] [543] [544] [545] [546] [547] [548] [549] [550]

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CHAPTER 9: Land and Work (pp. 110-121)

¹Franklin, *The Present State of Hayti*, p. 362.

²Herskovits, *Dahomey*, I, 300 ff., describes Dahomean polygamous marriage in its various forms. Although Dahomean plural marriage is complex in terms of gifts, obligations, and [541] [542] [543] [544] [545] [546] [547] [548] [549] [550]

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CHAPTER 12: *Songs of Complaint, Recrimination, and Gossip*
(pp. 137-147) 000

¹See Herskovits and Herskovits, *Suriname Folk-Lore*, pp. 23-32.

CHAPTER 13: *Comments on the Mighty: Political Songs* (pp. 148-162)

¹Léger, *Haiti, Her History and Her Detractors*.

CHAPTER 15: *Secret-Society Songs* (pp. 166-169)

¹Herskovits, *Dahomey*, I, p. 256.

²See Courlander, "Abakwa Meeting in Guanabacoa," *Journal of Negro History*, XXIX (1944), 461 ff.

CHAPTER 16: *Folk Tales: Bouki, Malice, and Jean Sante* (pp. 170-184)

¹The theme of throwing magic objects upon the ground to ward off a pursuer is widely known, but the story as told in Africa has special characteristics of its own, such as the elephant hair. In Ashanti tales, the prize is the tail of the queen elephant, which is needed to serve as a coffin. 171 538 1789

²This part of the tale, at least, dealing with the dragon that swallowed the sun, seems to be known in western Europe. Some reports of the tale of Graffelmutter's Bath have come from France. [177]

³Variants of "The President Wants No More of Anansi" are widely known around the world. The story is told among the Somali of East Africa, with the legendary character Abunuwas, a Persian trickster hero, playing the title role. Anansi plays the same part in West Africa, and other trickster heroes are identified with the same adventure in India and Southeast Asia. The tale has been reported also from the West Indian island of St. Martin ("He Meets the King's Conditions," in Parsons, *Folk-Lore of the Antilles, French and English*, Part II). 539 171

⁴The fishing story narrated here, except for the chase, is found in many versions in West Africa. The second part of the tale, the pursuit, has a special Haitian flavor. Bouki chasing Malice through the cult chief's ritual grounds and the church, with Malice trying to make appropriate use of the situation, is a special delight to Haitians. The dialogue between Bouki and Malice's behind is also regarded as very humorous.

⁵Known in virtually all Negro communities in the Americas, the tale of eating the honey (or butter, pork, or lard) seems to have come to the New World by way of Africa, although it is also known in Europe.

⁶The theme of the singing tortoise (or other animal, or an object such as a skull) has appeared in folk tales ranging from West Africa through the Americas to the Far East. This Haitian variant bears a striking resemblance to a tortoise story from the Gold Coast (Ghana). In the Gold Coast variant the tortoise asks the hunter who finds him to keep his singing ability a secret, but the hunter has to tell about his discovery. When the village headman hears about it, he calls for a test. The tortoise refuses to sing, and the hunter is punished. Then the tortoise sings his song, which emphasizes the hunter's bad faith. The philosophical tone of the Haitian tortoise's song, particularly the last one, is quite similar. The last line of the song is from a Haitian proverb.

CHAPTER 17: *Children's World: Gage Songs and Games* (pp. 185-188) 000

¹The description of this game is from Paul, "Les Jeux à gage," *Bulletin du Bureau d'Ethnologie*, July, 1947, p. 51.

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175 have explained it chiefly by the surprise element of the uprising. But
 669 when else in modern history have slaves successfully revolted against
 668 their armed masters and become permanently free? Successful revolutions even of people not in bodily slavery have had acknowledged leadership, whereas in Haiti no real leader appeared for the insurgents. Boukman's influence, indeed, at its widest never reached beyond a part of the northern plain; he had about the same range of power as a ward boss in the United States. On the plantations Hallaou, Hyacinthe, Lafortune, and others whose names are unimportant or unknown, Vodun houngans likewise welded slave opinion within their narrow districts. But no single great leader appeared. As the conflict was developed, without plan or unity under the divided and contradictory action of numerous blacks, what held the people together was, negatively, their hatred of the white masters; positively, their Vodun beliefs. Only later in the decade did a true leader, Toussaint L'Ouverture, emerge to consolidate their victory.

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776 As often happens among unsophisticated people convinced of the
 793 rightness of their cause, the local Vodun leaders were sure of their
 761 own invulnerability through the protection of one or another of the
 782 spirits.⁸ They convinced their followers as well, to such a degree that
 781 when an invulnerable chief fell there were dozens of reasons to explain the unexpected death rather than any disillusion. Usually, failure to follow the rigorous propitiation requirements of the protecting god offered the key to the misfortune. Various ones of them were known to be exacting and troublesome. The leader at Trou-Coffi, Romaine by name, had absorbed enough of the Roman Catholicism in Vodun to feel that the Virgin Mary was his especial patroness.⁹ Beyond this specific belief in invulnerability was the general trust that Vodun spirits would lead their devotees to success, would give them a happy issue out of all their distress.

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8. A parallel case of belief in invulnerability because of divine protection was that of the North American Indians both at the time of Tecumseh and later in the Sioux outbreaks at the climax of the Ghost-Dance Religion. See James Mooney, *The Ghost-Dance Religion and the Sioux Outbreak of 1890* (Fourteenth Annual Report of the Bureau of Ethnology, 1892-93 [Washington, 1896]), chap. X.

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9. The importance of Vodun beliefs in connection with the slave revolt is stressed by Dr. J.-C. Dorainvil, *Vodou et Nègres* (Port-au-Prince, 1931), pp. 33-34. He says of many of the chiefs: "The belief in their invulnerability was not at all the result of calculation, but was a true state of mind, a sort of auto-suggestion which explains very well the chronic heroism of certain leaders of the revolution in Saint-Domingue and of the war of independence of 1802-3."

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Vodun, then, was both widespread and powerful enough to be turned to most effective ends in 1791. Contemporary accounts of it still saw it as a meeting ground of superstitions. The French naturalist, Descourtilz, for example, was primarily struck by the use of the occult in connection with Vodun; he especially describes a woman who, under the seizure of her god, took a live coal in her hand without being burnt; a husband who by the use of magic struck his inconstant wife with a languorous malady, effective for half a year; and the knowledge of poison which was combined with the practice of magic. He mentions but one of the Vodun gods by name but implies the existence of many others."

Madiou, Haiti's first historian, likewise always spoke of Vodun as a savage survival; he says of a native general, "Lamour Dérance, plunged in gross errors, put his faith in *sorcery*, in the prophecy of *papas*, or priests of *African fetishism*." "In his scornful distaste for the vulgar he clearly indicated by his own italics some conspicuous elements of the developing religion: magic, the use of fetishes, and a Vodun priesthood. His illustration of Dérance's error was his making soldiers believe that bullets could not wound them:

When he marched to combat he was preceded by bands of Congos, Aradas, Ibos, Nabos, Mandingues, Haoussas, who threw themselves against the French battalions with a prodigious intrepidity, crying that the bullets were but dust. But this courage which *superstition* fed was shattered against the ramparts of . . . the Europeans' square formations.

It is noteworthy that the first three black rulers set themselves against Vodun because of its potentialities for sedition. The plots to overthrow the old régime had come to fruition at apparently innocent Vodun dances. Although the ingenuous aspect of the dance gathering had deceived the white masters, Toussaint, Dessalines, and Christophe knew the meaning of the assemblies. All three had to drive their people hard and knew that resentment would be an inevitable consequence; it must not have an opportunity to burgeon at nightly gatherings. Toussaint was the strictest of the three, for he forbade all dances and nocturnal assemblage." The other two singled

10. M. E. Descourtilz, *Voyages d'un naturaliste en Haiti, 1799-1803* (Paris, 1933 ed.), pp. 116-118.

11. Thomas Madiou, *Histoire d'Haiti*, III, p. 33.

12. In an order of January 4, 1800.

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776 the dead a right to whatever their survivors possess, and moreover
769 gives them the right to return to earth as ghosts.³¹

769 Strict rules of mourning prevail, both as regards clothing and behavior. The slightest lapse in the observation of these rules would
765 cause resentment on the part of the dead; fear of retribution would
775 be quite enough to ensure conformity even if public opinion did not.
782 Ghosts have the power to possess mortals, not as the loa do at a Vodun service or dance, but in the manner understood by American Negroes who say they have been "ha'nted," and so, continually thinking of the dead, live in nervous fear of a streak of bad luck. Such possession is a form of persecution, with continual consequent bad luck until the survivor has carried out all his obligations. It is especially significant, however, that a departed spirit takes vengeance only in matters thought by the Haitian to concern the Church. The ghost is not whimsical in his possession of mortals, and cannot resent treatment which is his due. The kind of treatment given a corpse depends upon the kind of death he died: a person struck by lightning, for example, would have no ceremonies at all, for lightning is an act of God.

787 Where the cult of the dead departs entirely from the teachings of
775 the Church is in the matter of magic, a topic shortly to be treated. It
789 may be briefly stated here that ghosts can be summoned back by special adepts for purposes of divination; that certain corpses are thought to be revived by evil persons who use these soulless, pathetic automata as slaves (these are the notorious *zombis*); and that black magic—that is, powerful influence for evil—can be worked by sorcerers who know how to command ghosts.

771 All other articles of the Vodun creed not already discussed, except
798 one, come under the heading of magic. That exception is the statement: "I believe in the Holy Catholic Church." The fact is as simple as the affirmation. If the Catholic priests fight Vodun, preaching frequently against its beliefs and practices, that is unfortunate, think the peasants: Vodun does not retaliate by fighting Catholicism. God and the saints have their province, and the loa theirs. The mind of the Haitian is simple enough to accept both sets of spiritual beings, and not philosophical enough to worry over the contradiction. Practically every Vodun worshiper thinks of himself as a Catholic.³²

31. See Herskovits, *op. cit.*, p. 215.

32. In this sketch of the Vodun creed, it has been constantly emphasized that each locality has its own variations both in belief and practice. The reader who is interested in pursuing the subject further should consult the works of Price-Mars, Herskovits, Dornainvil, Parsons, Hurston, et al. See Bibliography.

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4. Magic

771 It is difficult enough to make a distinction between religion and superstition; it is practically impossible, in dealing with a people who in their closeness to nature are not accustomed to the refinements of "civilized" thinking, to make one between magic and certain aspects of religion. Underlying both is belief in the supernatural; characteristic of both is a faith which recognizes a higher order of cause and effect operating with the lower one familiar in commonplace matters. Anthropologists hold various theories about magic, some saying that it is the set of practices out of which religion evolved, others that it exists for personal and practical ends and has little to do with religion; still others that it is a development out of religion, paralleling and complementing it.³⁵

771 One element which distinguishes religious practice from magic is the attitude toward spirits. In religion, the worshiper pays homage and humbly petitions, preserving meanwhile an attitude of humility to spirits or gods who must be propitiated; in magic, the human being, by coercive words and actions, commands the services of spirits who (if the magical rites have been properly performed) must obey. The distinction is not between good and evil, for a god may have both characteristics and be entirely capable of working harm to mortals. As already noted, in the Haitian system the gods are like men in being mixtures of both principles.

771 Another difference between religion and magic concerns time. Religion is social, open to all worshipers or at least to all of a group or social rank. Its rites are continually and repeatedly performed. Magic, on the contrary, though sometimes public and social, is generally private and, since it is for a specific purpose, is performed only when the need arises. A man who was thoroughly conversant with magic might go through his whole life without ever feeling the need of employing it or having to exert himself to fend it off. One turns to magic as a sophisticated man might turn to medicine. Either may be done without; both may be used to excess.

789 In Haitian Vodun, magic interweaves itself with the general faith.

791 35. See, for example, Ruth Benedict, "Magic," in *Encyclopaedia of the Social Sciences*, X, 39-44; A. Goldenweiser, *Early Civilization* (New York, 1922), chaps. X-XI; J. G. Frazer, *The Golden Bough* (London, 1907-15), *passim*; R. R. Marett, *The Threshold of Religion* (New York, 1914), *passim*; and Sumner and Keller, *op. cit.*, II, chaps. XXIX-XXXI.

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Everyone believes in it, though few would make nice distinctions between the two. Starting with extremes, the houngan conducting a service with sacrifice is officiating at a purely religious rite, while the bocor (sorcerer) concocting a love charm is dealing wholly in magic. It is perfectly proper, however, for a respectable houngan to brew a mixture, calling on the loa meanwhile for assistance, to cure a sick person: is this magic? Certainly it is private, specific, practical. A respectable houngan will not permit himself to dabble in evil magic, destined to bring misfortune to someone else;³⁶ but such work is the stock in trade of the bocor, who knows the dangers of his profession yet is willing to run the risk for the sake of high profit. Between the repugnant houngan and the awesome bocor may sometimes be found the *caplata*, a sort of jack-of-all-trades, who professes to be able to achieve whatever is demanded of him in magic, whether beneficial or harmful, but whose reputation is not high enough to make men trust him with important magical enterprises.

There exists one continual check to save the gullible from charlatanism on the part of the practitioner: the performer of any kind of magic must make frequent exhibitions of his powers. If the specialist cannot make his magic work, he soon loses his reputation. The career of magic is not one to be entered lightly. Constant search for medicinal plants, constant experimentation, comparison of practice—the requirements of the profession are as strenuous as those for the successful American doctor. Magic is like a live wire: it cannot be handled with impunity. The slightest slip on the part of the bocor might loose divine wrath on the bungler and quack. It is said that almost every bocor dies an evil death, hoist on his own petard. For the houngan the risk is not so great, since in general he relies upon the might of his own special loa, who of old has been familiar with him. True, he may run the risk of purchasing the services of other loa, but it is a risk, since his family loa, quick to feel insult, might punish him.

Magic runs the gamut from passive to active, simple to complex. The commonest manifestation of magic in Haitian daily life is one familiar to most peoples in the world—the charm. As in Italy and other southern European countries, the Haitian peasant believes in the evil eye. "Maldioque," it is called—a term not far removed from the Italian "*mal occhio*." The common belief is that certain persons,

36. This is commonly called "black" magic.

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789 generally through no wish of their own, have the uncanny ability to cause evil simply by a glance. One look is enough to do the damage. Although theory is a bit vague on this point, it appears that certain irritable spirits use the agency of the human eye to vent their spleen on mortals who are fortunate: good looks and strokes of luck act, consequently, as lodestones to the fateful glance. And where the glance falls ill luck may spread, harming all within reach. In the days of slavery people had such a fear of the evil eye that they did not hesitate to disfigure infants who at birth seemed to be particularly handsome and so likely to attract attention. Nowadays the practice is to avert the glance by making an *arrêt*. This "halt" may be either a special charm worn on the person or else the mark of a half-moon done with a caustic vegetable substance on the cheek. As with Europeans who believe in the evil eye, certain specialists ply a lucrative trade through their reputation for effective charms against the maldioque.

Other charms may be mentioned. There is the *garde* which protects its wearer against evil of any variety—the near relative of the good-luck charm worn by thousands of "civilized" people. There is the *ouanga*, or *wanga*, compounded to achieve a special end, generally an evil one. Faine remarks that *ouanga* is

[92] A Créole word of African origin [signifying] a philtre or simple of a special kind, compounded by an *houngan* out of such diverse ingredients as a dead chicken, some grains of indigo and maize, amulets, pieces of money, asafoetida, etc., the whole contained in a half-calabash. . . . The *Ouanga*, placed in the home of an enemy, is designed to bring him bad luck even to the extent of giving him elephantiasis ("gros pied") when he has inadvertently stepped on the *ouanga*.³⁷

The *ouanga* is the Haitian equivalent of the hoodoo, for through its influence one may (or so he believes) bring illness, misfortune, or death to an enemy. For every *ouanga* there is a *garde*, for every evil a cure. The art lies in finding out the nature of the *ouanga* causing harm, and then knowing exactly what to do to fend it off.

751 Historically the most interesting *garde* is that called a *drogue*,
 789 which is thought to insulate one against wound by weapons or bullets. Reference has already been made to the utter abandon with which the Negroes, both at the time of the insurrection and later in

³⁷ Jules Faine, *Philologie Créole* (Port-au-Prince, 1937), p. 319.

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the struggle for independence, threw themselves against the formidable weapons of the whites. Whenever in spite of the drogoue a man was wounded, there was always the explanation of other potent magic, never a surrender of the belief in drogoue. Tradition has it that Christophe wore a drogoue giving him immunity against all but silver bullets, and that he kept a silver bullet for suicide in case the need should arise—as it did. Drogoues were worn by the caco guerrillas, active from 1919 to 1922, who harassed the Marines during the Occupation of the country.

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Such forms of magic are found among practically every known folk. There are traces of charms in the folklore of most "civilized" people, as well as in actual, if secret, use by many apparent sophisticates.

The next commonest application of magic has to do with disease. Haiti is a poor and prevailingly illiterate country in which there are not enough trained medical doctors to serve adequately even the small population of the towns. People who live in the secluded valleys and on the mountainsides receive practically no medical attention. The disease rate if accurate figures could be obtained would certainly be shockingly high, with hookworm and malaria all but universal, and yaws, elephantiasis, and tuberculosis common. In the case of disease and its treatment, it is fair to say that the Haitian peasant is typically primitive.

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Sickness is thought to be caused either as a punishment or a warning by one of the loa, or by evil magic wrought by one's enemies. When a man falls ill, therefore, he sends for the specialist, whether houngan, bocor, or caplata, to discover the responsible loa; next, he must learn whether the loa is angry with him, and if so, for what reason; if it is found that the loa is acting through magical compulsion of an enemy, the treatment of the disease will be different from the case of a loa acting without human compulsion. An angry spirit can be appeased by proper sacrifices; a spirit acting as an agent of evil magic must be fought by another spirit, compelled by the countermagic of the patient's specialist. Sometimes the countermagic is simple exorcism by spells and incantations. At other times it is highly involved and dangerous, requiring exotic plants, continuous attention, even illegal practices such as mutilating a corpse. Casual observation might fail to detect the magical element in some of the operations, for they resemble merely the brews or applications of old wives' tales.

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generally believed that the compact always results fatally for the man who makes it, why anyone should enter into such an engagement. Craving for money or some other immediate form of power, however, bedims the reason; in the face of all-consuming desire, more than one man has been willing to ignore future pain for present reward. 754 776

It would be possible to conjure up a whole phantasmagoria of weird belief in connection with magic, although this would be unjust to the character of the Haitians. These people have their share of dire concepts, but no more than might be expected of a simple folk. One final magical belief must be treated, however, for it has reached the ears of the outside world in grim detail. This is the belief in the *zombi*. The word, as Faine explains, comes from the Bonda language of Africa (*zumbi* there), and was probably transmitted to Haiti by Portuguese slave traders. Faine continues: 789 [114] [192]

Zombi . . . designates in general a revenant, a phantom, an otherworldly spirit. In popular belief, certain sorcerers have the power, by means of charms and spells, to cause apparent death to individuals and then to bring them back to life again, even after they have been buried. These resuscitated persons, only half-conscious, are then, isolated in distant parts of the country, utilized for field work. Nourished on food from which salt is rigorously excluded, they are thought to be able to regain their natural senses and all their mental faculties if they taste the least grain of this substance. Such legends, circumstantially garbed and presented as actual facts by certain unscrupulous authors, have served as the theme of books which have made a great commotion in foreign countries. Taking advantage of the credulity of a public avid for exotic matters, for mysteries, for the supernatural, these writers have gained, in certain cases, the greatest success of publicity.²⁸ 114 754

Three attitudes are taken in regard to the *zombi*. There are skeptics who deny the existence of *zombis* altogether, setting down as fable most of the ideas current about them, and as mistaken diagnosis all the remainder. There are the credulous (including practically every peasant) who believe in and quite directly fear this potential fate. And there are those who believe that certain *bocors* know how to administer a subtle poison to intended victims which will cause suspended animation and give the appearance of death. Men in the prime of life suddenly sicken and die for no apparent reason. Once these pseudo-corpses are safely buried, the sinister person who has 754

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pronounced; later the lightning will strike, the disease will come, the child will die: the connection between curse and calamity will seem too obvious for contradiction. About certain persons is a look (some call it an aura) of evil which is almost palpable: folk belief has an explanation. For much of the mysterious coincidence in life a sophisticate will simply shrug his shoulders and attempt no explanation; he accepts his doctor's diagnosis or his lawyer's advice, and when these betray him falls back upon the many insurances of civilization. The Haitian needs an explanation for his ills, for he lacks doctors, lawyers, insurance: the explanation of magic may be incorrect, but it is the only one he has and it is backed up by events often enough to seem true.

Life is full of mishaps. The Haitian's loa are as real to him as the mountains and trees of his country. It is not to be wondered, therefore, that the peasant thinks his loa directly responsible for much of the evil that befalls. In this explanation the Haitian is not different from millions of other people, even Christians. It would, however, be a great mistake to emphasize the fear in Vodun faith and in the magic which proceeds from it to such an extent that the bright side is forgotten. The gods are likewise responsible for the good luck of mankind. If a man deeply desires to attain a specific good, there is room in both religion and magic for that also. It may be the love of a girl, money to pay a debt, a propitious day for holding a *coumbite* (or cooperative working bee), the birth of a son instead of a daughter: religion and magic avail for all of these, more with some individuals than with others. When an entire community holds a belief, the magic has a double chance of working. It is easier for a man to win his wife if she knows he is working magic to that end, than to persuade her without magic. This kind of magic is also easier to work than that which depends wholly upon the complaisance of the loa, as when rain is needed for crops at the proper time.

Religion, with its sister magic, is not for the Haitian a matter of special days, vague abstractions, or formal propriety. It is a daily strength for daily needs.